

## Hannictober Ficlets Collection

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# Hannictober Ficlets Collection

by [TheSilverQueen](#)

## Summary

A collection of my ficlets for the [#Hannictober calender](#). Summary will change to reflect the most current day, and warnings will be chapter-specific at the beginning of each.

Day 30: Ritual - In all fairness, Will is incredibly drunk when he does the ritual that summons the devil for a rent-free good apartment in New York.

Day 31: Happy Halloween - Will knows without being told how bad it is that his only alibi for the Jack'o'lantern Killer is that he was at a pumpkin carving class.

## Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

# Ghostbusters

## Chapter Summary

"We are *not* telling them that our first day was at a Ghostbusters movie."

## Chapter Notes

Warnings for this chapter: Some rude name-calling and possibly offensive language

. . . Yeah, I had no idea what to do with the prompt of "Ghostbusters". So this mess is the result. Whoops.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Will really, really, really doesn't like Halloween.

He wouldn't go so far as to say he hates it, per se, because free candy is nice, the cold weather makes people less likely to look at him funny when he bundles up in coats and flannels, and warm apple cider is the best thing after a day in the stream catching dinner.

However. If there is one thing he *does* dislike, it's the endless reruns of so-called "Halloween classics".

Will really doesn't understand the point of these movies. Real life is often scary enough, and he teaches students who more than understand that. Why they like to torture themselves with more ridiculous and scary movies, Will has no idea. Not to mention that these ridiculous scary movies often inspire a plethora of weird spooky murders and false alarms calls, all of which culminate in Will inevitably getting dragged out of bed at early hours for people mistaking skeleton decorations for real corpses or grisly murder scenes with assorted pumpkin and candy flairs.

That being said, Will is also sensitive to the moods of his students, and everyone's attention starts fixating on things other than what he's teaching almost the second October rolls around.

That's probably why he gives up and allows for an unplanned field trip to the nearest drive in theater, which happens to be showing a rerun of classics like Ghostbusters and The Nightmare Before Christmas. Will originally has no intention of showing up and just giving everyone credit for saying they attended for "educational purposes" but once the students find out that he's never seen the original, they pester him so much he agrees to go on the merit of

finally understanding all of the Jack Skellington jokes that were made during the reign of the Pumpkin Plugger.

(The killer in question liked to pose his victims with jack-o'-lanterns for heads, including pumpkin seeds for eyes and creepily carved smiles. They still haven't found three of the actual heads.)

Will suffers in silence through *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, although at least the style of animation is such that he's hoping it'll be too unrealistic for his frankly very realistic nightmares. The second it's over he scrambles up and away under the guise of getting more popcorn and soda.

Will hates popcorn and doesn't particularly enjoy soda.

He stands in front of the stand pretending to debate, but in reality he furiously calculates how quickly his students will notice his absence and how far away he is from his house. The answers are, sadly, very fast and very, very, very far. It's what he gets from living in the middle of nowhere and teaching FBI students to pay more attention to their targets, he supposes.

"Hurry up and order, retard, can't you read?"

Will looks up, momentarily disoriented, by the name-calling hulking man who shoves pointedly against his back. He would respond, but thankfully, he doesn't have to.

"He was waiting for me, our apologies that your patience was tried," comes the accented, sharply pointed words, as a tall man in a suit materializes out of seemingly nowhere to take Will's arm and guide him gently forward. Will's senses go on high alert, and in seconds he's gathered the impressions of *strong* and *tall* and *educated* and *foreign* and, most interesting of all, *amused*. There are other impressions too, lingering just out of the corner of his eye, but the man starts talking again, so Will gets distracted again.

"Would you like a large or medium apple cider, dear?" the man asks solicitously.

"Um." Will looks over his shoulder, judging that the name-caller is far away not to hear, and says, "I don't know you."

The man smiles and Will catches a flash of teeth, sharp teeth. *Wolf in a sheep's wool dressed up as a cat*. Dangerous pretending to be meek dressed up as tamed danger, layers within layers within layers. "Allow me to remedy that." He pats gently at Will's arm, where he's still holding it, and stops in front of a tree where a neat picnic basket and blanket are laying, pristine and undisturbed. "My name is Doctor Hannibal Lecter."

"Like the general?"

Lecter smiles wider, and this time it's softer and somehow more real, more human. "Indeed. And you?"

"Er, Will Graham, FBI."

For some reason, that amuses the man more than Will awkwardly folding himself onto the blanket on auto-pilot mode, whereas Lecter sinks down like a dancer and somehow contorts his long torso and longer legs into an elegant seated position leaning against the tree.

“Am I to assume that there is an investigation taking place?”

“If you include movies for educational purposes, yeah, I’m investigating how long it takes to get bored.”

“And your calculation?”

Will checks his watch. “30 minutes ago.”

“Hmm, I imagine that the ghost dog kept you at least semi-involved with the story,” Lecter says. “Apple cider?”

“Were you *stalking* me?”

“Heavens, why would I do that? No, but I’m afraid you do have a rather large collection of dog fur on your clothing, so I would imagine that you either have a large collection of dogs willingly or come in contact with them regularly. You don’t strike me as a K9 officer, and if you disliked dogs, you would make a better attempt of cleaning off the fur, so – that leaves someone with an intense fondness for dogs.”

Will gapes at him. He’s not sure whether to be insulted or flattered, to be honest, and Lecter is still pouring out apple cider like it’s a goddamn tea party.

Maybe a Mad Hatter’s tea party, *because Will still has no idea who this man is.*

“You make me sound like a crazy dog spinster.”

“Are you?”

“That’s fishing.”

“True, I find I prefer to hunt.”

Will shivers. There’s just something in Lecter’s eyes when he says that, a slight lilt to his words, like an innuendo he doesn’t *quite* grasp.

“Apple cider,” Lecter repeats, and offers the canteen like it’s a fine china porcelain cup.

“No thanks, I’ve had some already.” *Plus I don’t feel like getting roofied.*

Lecter laughs, at that, and pointedly takes a sip before offering it again. “I promise you, I’m not in the habit of drugging my dates,” he says playfully. “I left my days of prescribing and injecting drugs behind me when I left surgery. And you haven’t had this kind of apple cider.”

Will accepts the cup warily and takes a sip. It actually is quite good, damn it. “This isn’t a date,” he protests, grasping feebly at the last straws of sanity.

“Isn’t it?” Lecter says, and nothing more, smiling that mysteriously sharp smile again.

Ten minutes later, they’re swapping critiques on the movie. Hannibal, Will finds, is immensely skilled as a conversationalist and witty to boot, sparring playfully but elegantly to everything Will says, and often with an angle Will hadn’t seen. It gets so intense Will finds himself inching closer and closer, until they’re so close they’re practically sharing body heat, so close that they don’t have to say their observations so much as whisper them and laugh together. It gets even worse when Will tilts his cup too far and spills apple cider on his coat, and Hannibal pulls out a spare coat from seemingly nowhere and has wrapped him up in it before Will’s even finished sputtering out his apology.

“There,” Hannibal says warmly, settling back down with great satisfaction, like the cat who’s gotten the canary. “No harm done.”

“You know,” Will says slowly, “are you sure you weren’t stalking me, Mr. I Had A Spare Coat For No Reason?”

“One should always be prepared.”

“What, were you a Boy Scout?”

“As it happens, no. Were you?”

“Never stayed in a place long enough.” And wow, Will doesn’t know what was in that apple cider, but he did not intend to say *that*.

Yet he feels no alarm, none at all, and even better, there’s no pity emanating from Hannibal right now to make Will regret saying it. Hannibal hears it, registers it, tucks it away in that great big brain of his, and merely moves on with the conversation.

“Could I convince you to stay in a place long enough for a meal?” Hannibal asks.

“ . . . Are you . . . asking me out on a date?”

“A meal between friends, then.”

“No, I mean – ” The words catch in Will’s throat, and he snarls without being able to help himself. *Why me – I’m just me – a person with bad dreams and dog fur everywhere – and you’re you – why me*, all the words tangle up in his throat, closing it, choking him, and he can’t say anything, even though he knows he should.

But it’s okay.

Hannibal looks at him with dark eyes and simply smiles, like he can read Will’s mind, and he takes Will’s hands and kisses the fingers, one by one, like a blessing, and Will’s throat eases with each kiss.

“I think I would benefit greatly from getting to know you better, and you me,” Hannibal says, soft but strong, like a stone set in motion that cannot be moved or altered. He’s made his mind, and he’s going to get what he wants, with a determination that led a general to wage

fight that nearly brought one of the greatest civilizations to its knees. “If you’re not opposed?”

“No,” Will whispers, because to say anything louder would shatter the moment.

Behind them, the ghostbusters team cross their streams and Gozer is defeated as marshmallow rains down everywhere. Will, though, finds he can’t look anywhere but Hannibal’s face, backlit with adoration and wonder and want, as though somehow, somehow, he actually thinks he’s gotten a victory by scoring a date with a grumpy, sarcastic, nightmare-ridden, fur-covered scruffy teacher. And hey, it’s not like Will’s got anything to lose. He’s definitely going to get a decent meal, if the homemade apple cider is a sign. Plus he kinda wants to see prim, stuffy Hannibal’s reaction to seven dogs all burying him in their enthusiasm.

“Excellent,” Hannibal says, and kisses him.

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“We are *not* telling them our first date was at a Ghostbusters movie.”

“Oh? Why not?”

“ . . . You know, I don’t even remember the movie.”

“That’s hardly an argument against it. I imagine most movie dates result in neither party remembering much of the movie.”

“Did you just imply that we spent the entire movie making out?!”

“I seem to recall a few kisses.”

“You started them!”

“I recall no objection from you.”

“Hannibal Lecter, I – ”

“Yes?”

“Shut up and kiss me.”

FINIS

## Chapter End Notes

I hope you enjoyed it! I enjoyed writing it, a little Halloween fun is always good for poor antisocial Will.

Tomorrow's prompt is "Pumpkin", so I'll see you there if you're interested.

# Pumpkin

## Chapter Summary

As Hades offered his queen the fruit of his realm, pomegranates, Hannibal will offer Will the fruit of his realm - pumpkin.

## Chapter Notes

Warnings for this chapter: I don't think anything. Some vague description of people getting terrorized by an oversized animal, maybe.

And yes this is late, shhh, I had Internet problems.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

It's not exactly the first time mortals have accidentally wandered into Hannibal's domain (there was that sweaty cheese-obsessed man, a very confused man-eating pig, and a very, very, very lost pizza delivery boy) but it *is* the first time that said mortal has actually been able to see Hannibal's domain.

"Oh," the mortal says, blinking at a giant screeching Canadian goose skeleton that's terrorizing some animal torturers. "And here I thought my hallucinations were bad."

Hannibal lowers his sketchpad. It's not like he was drawing anything interesting anyways, and this mortal is lovely, in a fey sort of way, big blue eyes and curls of brown hair and a beautiful gleaming soul, shot through with streaks of red and black and glowing like a supernova compressed into a tiny little shell of skin and bones.

"What do you see?"

"A big Canadian goose skeleton that's running around."

It's Hannibal's turn to blink. The Mist generally protects anything of the mythical realm from perception from mortals. It doesn't quite overwrite what someone sees – because if a giant hellhound runs past you, you will feel it – but it makes it . . . simpler, so to speak, so that that the mortal mind can fill in the blanks with something . . . well, easier to comprehend. The pizza delivery boy hadn't seen a skeleton, he'd seen a flock of geese – and promptly booked it right back out the hole in the protective barrier before Hannibal could even properly get a good look at him.

The sketchpad dissipates into mist when it leaves Hannibal's hand. It's just an extension of his imagination, so it'll reappear when he needs it, but if everything he imagined stayed corporeal then his realm would be overcrowded immediately. It's how he stays somewhat entertained in eternity.

"You can see that?"

The mortal scowls at him and those streaks of black in his soul grow darker, coiling like little snakes that hiss at an approaching predator. "Oh, great, another doctor to tell me I'm insane."

Hannibal doesn't look down, but for a second he's tempted to. The Mist obscures his true form too, after all, because no mortal would have a functioning brain after seeing it, but it is telling that this mortal's mind chose to make him look like a doctor. It's not so much about fears and weakness as it is about the mortal mind choosing the easiest route to fill in the blanks, and *this* mortal chose to make Hannibal a doctor.

"Why would I do that?" Hannibal asks, taking another step forward.

"Because you all say I'm insane." Behind them, the Canadian goose flaps its skeletal wings, and half the group falls to the ground from the force of the gale as the goose gleefully starts pecking at its unfortunate prey. "You seriously don't see that giant goose over there?"

"I don't think you're insane," Hannibal replies.

That earns him a sidelong wary glance. The streaks of red begin to glow, but softly, not like hope but like curiosity. This mortal doesn't trust or hope, apparently. But he's not so far gone to be a complete cynic.

"Where am I, anyways?"

"What's the last thing you remember?"

The mortal scrubs at his eyes. "Um, going to bed. Although I have been sleepwalking recently, so I guess that's why I'm not in my house."

Well, that explains the clothes. Or, rather, the lack of them. This mortal's clad in nothing but underpants and a rather ill-fitting shirt. He doesn't even have shoes, but, strangely, has managed to avoid all of the more dangerous paths to Hannibal's realm.

Although sleepwalking sounds familiar. Very familiar.

Hannibal sighs. If this is another test by Zeus, the god'll have one less son to call his own.

"Would you mind doing me a favor?" Hannibal says, and summons a dagger of celestial bronze to his hand. It glows faintly in the dark and Hannibal is careful not to let the blade catch his hand. Even gods can be hurt by celestial bronze that is properly blessed and forged, and this is a weapon that fits exactly that. "Hold that for me, please."

The mortal reaches out on autopilot – and the dagger passes harmlessly through his hand.

“What the *hell*?” The mortal claws frantically at the dagger where it’s fallen to the ground, but it remains stubbornly motionless.

“Interesting,” Hannibal says. So a true mortal, not one of his nephews or nieces or many varied cousins, yet able to see everything in his real as it truly is. This one is special.

The mortal curls up into a ball, panting and almost hyperventilating. “Come on, come on, wake up,” he breathes, rocking back and forth and pinching himself. “Come on, wake up, you’re in Wolf Trap, you’re home, you’re safe, you have seven dogs and your name is Will Graham and it’s sometime in the middle of the night, *WAKE UP!*”

“I’m afraid,” Hannibal says, kneeling down, “that you are very much awake, Will.”

The mortal startles at his touch. “How do you know my name?”

“Oh, William Graham,” Hannibal murmurs, reaching deep down into the depths of his beautiful soul, “I know so, so much more than just your name.”

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“So . . . this . . . is purgatory?” Will says, much later, when he’s finally calmed down and dressed a little more appropriately.

Hannibal nods and proffers another plate of food, this time breakfast food – eggs and the like – which is probably more acceptable to the mortal who’s staring at the foie gras like it’ll reanimate and bite him.

“So why’s it so . . . Halloween like?”

Hannibal pauses. Thinks. He hasn’t quite stayed in touch with the mortal world, except to watch as the souls banished here get new and interesting ways of punishment, and Halloween isn’t really something he’s familiar with. “I beg your pardon?”

Will waves a fork around, scattering bits of scrambled egg, but Hannibal excuses the rudeness. At least he’s eating. “Halloween. The skeletons, and the spooky mist stuff, and the people in costumes, and those weird glowing pumpkins,” he elaborates. “Why does purgatory look like that? I thought it was more . . . I don’t know, bland? Endless tramping around and around trying to find heaven?”

“I’m afraid that’s not quite how it works,” Hannibal says. “Each soul is judged, and each given a proper sentence. I imagine that by heaven, you refer to Elysium, and if a soul is banished here, then they aren’t worthy of it.”

“So this is hell?”

“No,” Hannibal sighs. Is this truly what mortals know about the underworld and death? No wonder Hades is getting so grumpy. “No, the equivalent of hell you describe is Tartarus. Have you ever heard of the Fields of Punishment?”

“Uh, maybe.”

“It is the realm destined for people who never did enough good deeds for Elysium or enough terrible deeds for Tartarus. Purgatory is an extension of that. I specialize in those who did terrible things, but never got their own hands dirty, as it was. It is a fitting end, to face punishment for all they refused to accept responsibility for in life.”

“So the giant Canadian goose?”

Hannibal shrugs. That had been a very amusing day the first time it appeared and started terrorizing souls. “People responsible for animal cruelty, albeit from a distance.”

Will stabs a sausage. “Good.” His tone is vehement, and Hannibal knows it as intimately as he knows this man’s soul. Will is an animal-lover, and to him, the worst thing of all is to mistreat an animal.

Hannibal glances into the distance. The pumpkins are beginning to glow brighter as the night wanes and the sun-chariot begins to spin closer. Soon the pumpkins will be so bright that to approach them will be pain, and no more souls will enter or leave Hannibal’s domain until the sun-chariot has moved on.

If Will does not find the portal he came through and return by the time the pumpkins are at their full strength, he’ll never leave. The Furies always close the portals by night, even though desperate souls and monsters wear new ones whenever they can.

Hannibal clicks his fingers, and all of the dishes vanish, leaving Will staring wistfully after the plate of steaming fish. In their place, a gleaming plate of celestial bronze and imperial gold emerges, magnificent and terrible in its beauty. Piled on it are pumpkin seeds, fragrant and shimmering slightly, reflecting the light of the parent pumpkins they came from, although these do not burn when touched.

“What’s this?”

“A choice,” Hannibal says truthfully, because he isn’t a monster. “You cannot stay in this realm as you are when the sun rises, so if you wish to leave, now is the time. Cerberus can guide you back home. I’m sure he would take a liking to you.”

Will picks up a seed and fingers it. To someone without the Sight, they might see poor replicas of seeds, molded in clay or perhaps gold, depending on their taste. “Or?”

“Or you can remain with me, at my side, lord and ruler of my domain.”

Will drops the seed. “*What?!*”

“I do believe my offer was clearly explained,” Hannibal teases.

“No, but – ” Will fumbles, blushing bright red, as his soul pulses, the black retreating and the gold surging forward, interest and want tangling tight and strangling his voice. “You don’t even know me!”

“I’m a god, Will. There’s very little you could possibly say or do that I haven’t seen before.”

“And here I thought you said I was interesting because I was new,” Will says petulantly.

“You are,” Hannibal promises, and with a thought he’s suddenly behind Will, grasping at his shoulders and purring at the scent of him, warm and fresh and so undeniably *human*. “In all my years, I have never been as surprised by anyone or anything as you. Even as I am, with all the knowledge of humanity and you, I could never entirely predict what you would do, Will.”

Hannibal leaves unspoken the real words behind it: *Do you have any idea how interesting that is, to an immortal god?*

Will’s a clever boy. He’ll know.

Judging by the way he inhales sharply, Will does.

He picks up another seed. Pokes at it. Brings it slowly to his mouth, sniffing at it like it contains a poison that if he just sniffed a little harder he’d be able to detect.

“What’s the catch?” Will whispers.

Hannibal laughs, and the chair Will is sitting in dissolves, leaving him to clasp his beautiful boy in his hands. It tingles, the meeting of god-form and human-flesh, and it almost hurts. Gods are not meant to touch humans, not really. For Will, though, Hannibal is more than willing to endure the pain.

“You can never leave,” Hannibal says, just as soft. “Not this place. Not purgatory. And never me.”

The supernova glows a little brighter at that, longing and want and *hope*, so bright Hannibal actually squints for the first time since the great war. Humans souls burn so fleetingly, but so brightly, and Will’s soul is more beautiful than anything he’s ever seen.

“I will never let you go, William. You’ll be mine unto eternity,” Hannibal promises.

Will tips his head back, and his eyes are soft and mischievous. “That means you’ll be mine, won’t you?”

Clever, clever boy. “Who could ever compete with you?”

Just as the pumpkins flare up, burning bright with Greek fire, as the moon sets and the sun-chariot begins racing across the sky, Will Graham the mortal opens his mouth and swallows a glowing pumpkin seed.

Hannibal laughs, and as Will screams, convulsing and shuddering and shaking apart, the thrones of the elder gods shake and shuffle as one more throne appears, gleaming, to be included in the grand halls of Olympus. The very plane of existence shakes, terrifying souls and monsters alike, from the bliss-filled villas of Elysium to the fiery pits of Tartarus, and Hannibal laughs even more, for here in his arms he has caught a prize greater than any to be found in Elysium or Tartarus.

Will the god opens his eyes, liquid gold of amazement meeting Hannibal's own blood red of adoration, and smiles.

FINIS

#### Chapter End Notes

All the references here come from Rick Riordan's "Percy Jackson & The Olympians" and "The Heroes of Olympus" series, they were awesome and I loved them and if you haven't read them and are interested in Greek/Roman mythology, I highly recommend them.

Day 3 is "trick or treat". I hope to see you there, although honestly I had no idea what to do with that prompt. But I also didn't have any idea what to do with "ghostbusters", so we'll see what the muse pops out.

# Trick or Treat

## Chapter Summary

Hannibal misunderstands the meaning of trick or treat.

## Chapter Notes

Warnings: none

Yeah I also had no idea for how to do this. Although if you go to tumblr and search #Hannictober you'll find some truly amazing art for it that is waaaaaaay better than this.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The first time Hannibal notices, it's because Will – who normally cannot wait to get away from shopping trips – ends up lagging behind.

“Adam?”

Will's false name still sits heavily on his tongue, and it's hardly natural coming off of it, but Hannibal doesn't really mind, for Hannibal's own false name is something Will also stumbles off. Of course, with Will, people usually brush it off as his normal social anxiety, causing him to fret and blush and shy away into Hannibal's shadow. It's a little harder for Hannibal to hide it.

Will is staring, seemingly mesmerized, by an entire display of Halloween decorations. There are pumpkins stickers on the bottom of the store front, with cackling witches zooming about on broomsticks, little black cats creeping around, trees hung with spiderwebs and spooky lights, and bats swooping around. There are also countless generic smiling children, dressed in sheets and company processed clothes for costumes, milling around and clutching pumpkin-shaped baskets. The words “TRICK OR TREAT” are emblazoned at the top in eye-searing orange and yellow colors.

“Adam, darling,” Hannibal says, sliding an arm around his waist. “I thought you couldn't wait to leave.”

Will blushes, but at least he no longer jumps whenever Hannibal touches him. It was a long road, each of them learning to control their reactions to the other's touch – Hannibal, from leaning in like a starving man blessed by the touch of an angel (“You're like a weirdly touch-starved cat,” Will had said) and Will, from shying away due to old pain and old memories (“I

know that you won't hurt me, but my brain can't escape it," Will had tried to explain). Hannibal knows, and he understands. The brain protects itself, and only time can change the way people react.

This is why it is a victory – for Hannibal at least – when Will not only no longer shies away from his touch but also reaches out, eager, leaning back against Hannibal and nuzzling into his coat.

"Sorry, got distracted."

"So I see. Shall we?"

"Of course."

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"Trick or treat was a big thing," Will explains, later, drowsy and flushed with warmth as he lolls around in their bed.

It takes Hannibal a moment to process his words. He's too busy staring at the expanse of bare skin, contrasting so perfectly with the dark blue of their bed sheets. "A big thing with yourself?" he asks, finally, as Will smirks knowingly at him. "Or with those you called friends?"

Will yawns, curling around a pillow like a contented kitten, eyes drifting to half mast. "Me, when I was little," he mutters into the pillow. "It was . . . like . . . the one time I could go out and pretend to be normal. No one cares if you're jumping at shadows if everyone's jumping at shadows and laughing it off as Halloween decorations."

Hannibal swallows his instinctive response. Will isn't normal, and Hannibal loves him all the more for it. "And how did that make you feel? To be normal?"

"All too aware of the fact that I wasn't," Will admits with a sigh.

"I imagine you had trouble securing a proper costume."

"That's an understatement." Will raises a hand under the bed sheet, miming a scissor motion. "I used to take towels and cut holes in them to be a ghost, so no one would know it was me. No amount of washing would ever had made our sheets white enough for playing a ghost, but sometimes, I could steal towels from motels."

Hannibal hums and gives into the temptation to rest at his angel's side, gathering his beautiful boy up and combing his fingers through the expanse of Will's curls, which have grown out since the days following the great fall off the cliff. Will accepts him with a bit of fair-natured grumbling before deciding that he makes a better and warmer body pillow than his current substitute and rolling over to flop onto Hannibal's chest and nuzzle him like the human-sized cat he is.

"Did you enjoy it all the same?" Hannibal asks.

"Hmm? Yeah. I really did."

Will's voice is so slow and sleepy that Hannibal's first instinct is to kiss him, which he does, but it also means that the conversation effectively stops for the night because Will takes that as his cue to drop off into a fitful sleep.

It also means that Hannibal is deprived of his chance to ask more questions.

---

Furtive Googling on his tablet tells Hannibal that "trick or treat" is a reference to a common Halloween tradition where children go around in costumes to beg for candy from neighbors. To Hannibal, the saying seems rather outdated, since a "treat" is expected almost always and renders the "trick" redundant, but this isn't about Hannibal.

It's about Will.

And it's not that Will's unhappy with their current state of affairs. He loves devoting his days to volunteering at the animal shelter and the local vet's office, washing and walking and petting every dog he comes across, and he allows Hannibal to pamper him with long massages and warm baths, dress him in clothes that properly accentuate his natural beauty, and spoil him with beautifully prepared meals befitting of his station. There is no deception in Will's eyes or voice; he is happy with Hannibal, and Hannibal is overjoyed to be with him.

Still, sometimes, Hannibal knows that Will still longs for the "good old days", and he reckons that it's not out of his power to arrange for a little trip back to memory lane.

Even if he's pretty sure that Google is messing with him about the true meaning of trick or treat.

---

Hannibal starts off simple. He leaves his tablet pointedly on the table, unlocked and open to a webpage. Will, ever the curious one, promptly reads it.

"Why are you Googling sailboats and yachts?"

"What are you referring to, dearest?"

Will holds up the tablet. "Why are you Googling sailboats?" he repeats.

"Oh, it was an ad that popped up," Hannibal says. "You can close it, I don't need it, darling."

Will gives him a weird look, but does as requested.

Next, Hannibal allows Will to overhear him discussing a money transfer with his accountant, a really delightful woman who has never even batted an eye at any of Hannibal's odd requests and has faithfully tended to his many overseas accounts in the years he spent wallowing in the basement of the BSCHI.

"Did I read out the correct amount?"

"Yes, you did, thank you," Hannibal says.

“Okay, I’ll ensure that the transfer is complete by the end of the day tomorrow.”

“Thank you again.”

Will is staring at him when he gets off the phone. “Did you just transfer a million dollars into our getaway account?”

Hannibal mimics a sigh and a flinch. “It is a rainy day fund, as they are called, not a getaway account, Will.” They have drained it on occasion for quick getaways, but it’s not really the main purpose of that particular account.

“What in god’s name are you doing with one million dollars?”

“Just shoring up the account.”

Will points a pen at him from where he’s filling in the crossword. “Hey, I like it here. I want advance warning if you do something that sends the police after us. Again.”

“I seem to recall that it was not me who attracted the attention of the authorities last time.”

“He kicked a dog!”

“And therein lies my point.”

Finally, Hannibal allows himself to be caught eyeing boats in the marina when they have a nightly stroll along the beach. Will is roaming behind him, picking up seashells that catch his eye and allowing the waves to crash over his feet, so Hannibal comes to a stop and starts eyeing boats, weighing and dismissing them in equal measure.

“Han – Nigel.”

“Adam.”

“If you get me a boat, at least ask me about it first,” Will says, all sweet exasperation.

“If I get a boat, I will at least ask you first.” Which they both know doesn’t cover for a boat he may already have bought.

“Nigel.”

“Adam.”

Will flounces off in a huff, but Hannibal catches the pleased curve to his smile, so he gathers himself up to chase and he and Will spend a very enjoyable evening playing cat-and-mouse among the sand and waves, returning home for a very energetic lovemaking session that breaks their nightstand and gets sand all over the stairways, which puts both of them in a good mood, to the point that Will stops protesting about boats and Hannibal, with many put-upon sighs, allow for a midnight snack raiding of his kitchen.

“Seriously, I don’t need a boat.”

“As you wish, beloved.”

---

When everything is finally ready, Will comes home to Hannibal sitting on their bed, hands laid out and closed into fists, beaming.

Will drops his bag. “I said no boat,” he says automatically.

Hannibal tsks at him. “Not quite the response I was hoping for.”

“What?”

“What are the magic words, Will?”

“I’m sorry?”

“I do not see you shedding your usual trail of dog fur into the house, so I see no need for apologies.”

“Um, please?”

“Three words, actually.”

“Pretty please with a cherry on top?”

“That was seven.”

“I dunno.”

Hannibal tilts his head towards the window, where numerous carved pumpkins have taken residence among their neighbors like cheerful little brownies to light the way and guard the house.

“Seriously?”

Hannibal smiles mysteriously, and proffers both fists yet again.

“Fine. Trick or treat.” And Will actually smiles as he says it, which takes away the edge of irritation and petulance in his voice.

“Treat,” Hannibal replies, and opens his fists to reveal that one is empty and the other is holding an orange, yellow, and red key, like the colors of Halloween, including a festive pumpkin sticker at the very top. It had taken several sketches for the key to be painted correctly, but Hannibal judges it was worth it.

Will, however, stares at the key like he suspects Hannibal’s about to gut him with it. “That’s . . . not how it works.”

“No? I was under the impression you were nostalgia for the days of trick or treat, wherein you could pretend that the monsters in your head were seen by everyone. Or perhaps a

longing for when you were innocent and thought all monsters only lay in wait in the dark and avoided the light.”

“Um . . . . no.”

Will kisses him sweetly, smiling, to take away the sting.

“Hannibal,” he says, soft voice like a confession to a priest. “I just wanted candy.”

“Strange name for a pet, I admit, but you could have chosen worse ones.”

“What?”

“Closet on the left, bottom of the stairs.”

Will goes flying out of the room so fast he leaves behind only the impression of curls whipping against Hannibal’s face and the scent of pleased surprise in his wake. Hannibal smiles and follows at a more sedate pace.

There’s a creak, a snap, and then a joyful bark.

“YOU GOT ME A DOG?!?!?”

“Is that not the definition of a treat?”

Will’s smile is so brilliant Hannibal imagines it could rival the sun he has pictured in his mind palace. It could light up every room under its glow, and it could sustain Hannibal where all food and water might turn to ash with bitter memories and old pain. Will, happy and safe and free, is the most beautiful thing he could ever memorize, and no drawing he ever does will rival that beauty as it is right now, in front of him and struggling to contain the wriggling, barking, licking ball of puppy fur.

“I love you, you cryptic weirdo.”

Inside, Hannibal does a silent victory dance. Even if Will later mocks him for misunderstanding an easily explained Halloween tradition for months to come.

FINIS

## Chapter End Notes

Day 4 is "séance"! See you tomorrow for another fluffy alternate meeting :D

# Séance

## Chapter Summary

Hannibal hires a magician to entertain his patients at the children's ward. Will brings a dog, balloons, and glitter.

## Chapter Notes

Warnings: none

Fluffy alternate meeting again, yay! \*throws confetti\*

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

To say that this has been one of the more stressful days of Hannibal's career is not quite accurate. Hannibal thrives under stress.

It is, however, one of his most frustrating days.

It begins with an overzealous intern who spills cheap instant coffee all over his scrubs. Hannibal doesn't take his business card, because he doesn't have any, but he does make off with the man's spare ID card to insert into his rolodex. It doesn't get any better when Frederick Chilton calls out, citing a "family emergency", which means that the staff is short one doctor. And, to add insult to injury, Chilton was the one responsible for arranging the magician to come entertain the patients, and that magician is now 4 hours late and they have no way of contacting him.

All of this means that Hannibal ends up spending a good 30 minutes he could have spent otherwise most productively searching for a replacement magician.

Now, he doesn't begrudge his patients this. They are all sweet children and many won't be able to go home until well after the holidays but also are not well enough to go trick or treating, so having a magician come here to entertain them is a good compromise.

What Hannibal does abhor is bad planning with no secondary plans.

Finally, he manages to secure one magician who is able to come in on such short notice *and* is willing to put up with the inevitable security precautions for entering a children's ward in a hospital.

“What’s his name?” Alana asks when he reemerges. She’s a lovely resident that he’s mentoring, so when she offers him his thermos with a knowing smile, he returns it easily and with genuine pleasure.

“He calls himself ‘Will the Watcher’.” Hannibal takes a sip and feels some of the tension drain out at the taste of familiar, homemade brew. “And he said he might also be bringing a dog.”

“To what? Pull out of a hat?”

Hannibal shrugs. “As long as he stops the children from saying ‘don’t bother, it’s no problem, I can’t imagine I’ll have too great an objection to him.”

---

Will the Watcher tumbles in about an hour later. Except for the well-behaved dog wearing a vest that containing little party horns and bags of balloons sitting patiently at his side, Hannibal would never have guessed that this was his magician.

He’s not wearing any fancy clothes, just simple plaids with khaki pants. He’s even got glasses.

“He looks like a nerd,” Beverly whispers as she passes him, pretending to be examining a clipboard.

“Miss Katz,” Hannibal reprimands.

“You’re thinking it too.”

“Will the Watcher?” Hannibal asks politely.

The man looks up and then jumps to his feet, twitching. “Um, well, my name’s Will Graham,” he stammers. “That – That’s just for show, um, and you – are you Dr. Lecter?”

Hannibal carefully does not look at his name tag, which clearly states his name and position in large black font. For some reason he can’t quite verbalize, he finds the man’s twitchiness rather . . . endearing. “Yes,” he confirms. “Welcome to the Children’s Ward. I imagine that security has already informed you of the proper procedures?”

Will nods, running the leash for his dog over and over through his fingers. “Yeah, I brought non latex balloons just in case.”

“And your dog?”

“Winston’s well trained,” Will says, pride coloring his voice. “He won’t jump on anymore, and unless I take him off the leash, he won’t leave my side. He also just had a bath, so he shouldn’t have anything that could trigger a reaction on him.”

Hannibal glances at the man and notes the little details – shirt half tucked in, pant hems slightly damp – and reads, *I gave him a bath myself and then ran out to the store for special balloons*. His opinion of the man rises slightly. Before even speaking to security, this man

already realized that certain precautions were necessary and went out of his way to ensure that the children would be safe.

“Then by all means, follow me.”

---

The children are beyond delighted by Will and Winston. They go to the little cafeteria and clear out some chairs and tables, and then Will starts doing tricks, by himself and with his dog. Winston catches all sorts of toys that any of the children toss him and politely brings it back, he stands on his paws to offer dances, and he practically shivers with joy whenever the children touch him. Will makes balloon animals and tells slightly bleak jokes that the children appreciate and even has mini confetti glitter showers that the children gleefully prance through.

His most successful act, though, is his grand finale, where he sits everyone down and leads them through a séance.

“Now,” Will says, all business like, as several of the children cuddle with Winston, “in this case, we’re all going to hold hands, and I’m going to play the medium, and we’re just going to see what friendly spirits are knocking around, yeah?”

The children – who by now have practically adopted him – all nod eagerly.

“Great, let’s start.”

Will tilts his head back, takes a deep breath, and then opens his eyes again, and all the children gasp, because his eyes are suddenly bright gold, glittering and shimmering and almost blank.

“I’m sensing . . . a woman named . . . Louise,” Will murmurs.

Abigail sits forward with a harsh swallow. She hasn’t seen her mother in two years, and she was too sick to attend the funeral. Her father had flown into a rage and destroyed all of the pictures, leaving her, essentially, with nothing but fading memories.

Will turns his head to regard her, like a curious bird cocking its head. “Hello, Abigail,” Will says, soft, and his eyes are suddenly brimming with tears. “You’ve grown so big, darling, oh, you’re so beautiful.”

“Mom,” Abigail whimpers.

Will smiles, and his entire face smoothes out, erasing some tension Hannibal hadn’t even noticed he was carrying. It sends a shiver down his spine.

“I do love you so, Abby.”

“I miss you.”

“I’m still with you, Abby,” Will assures her. “I’m always with you. You’re so strong, my darling, I believe in you. You’re going to get better and be released and you’re going to be

amazing, and I'm going to be with you the whole way, I promise."

Abigail swallows and her smile is forced, but something about her seems . . . lighter. Stronger. Like a potion boiled down to its original ingredients of spidersilk and mist, and made all the better for it.

The lights flicker, and Will's eyes blink, turning in a second from gold back to blue. He gives a pronounced bow, and all the children applaud, just in time for the nurses to start corralling everyone for dinner. Will even hands out little Halloween stickers of Winston dressed in amusing dog costumes, which means the children leave without fuss or protest, chattering happily about the day to their relieved nurses.

---

As Will is petting Winston and gathering up some of the scattered confetti, Hannibal sidles up.

"Contact lenses?"

Will grins up at him, somehow more relaxed after spending hours with children than before. "A magician never reveals his secrets," he teases.

Hannibal hums. "It was a nice touch, to target Abigail," he says, switching the subject. "She has reached a plateau in her recovery after her father refused to visit her or speak about her mother. I imagine that with that performance in mind, she shall soon be farther along on her path to recovery."

Will clips a leash back onto Winston. "I'm glad to hear it. She seemed . . . happier, after that. I hope it helped."

"Might I interest you in some dinner? The fish here is generally quite good."

"Hospital food really isn't my thing."

"Then I shall hold out hope for a repeat performance. For the children's benefit, of course."

Will gives him a shy smile. "For the children, yeah."

---

A week later, Hannibal walks in on Abigail having an animated conversation over the phone, giggling and talking endlessly. It's a startling sight, given that she's mostly tended to stay in the corner reading her books or staring off into the distance, guilt and her silence taking its toll. Her throat is mostly healed now, but she didn't use her voice for so long that she fell out of practice, and now it's usually an effort to get her talking again.

"I'm pleased to see you talking," Hannibal says warmly. "And who was that, Abigail?"

Abigail blushes. "Um, Will, he's been really nice," she says. "Plus he said he'd bring some of his other dogs for me to meet."

"Indeed?"

“Yeah. He’s been giving me some really great advice, actually.”

“That’s good to know.”

Hannibal finishes his notation and is about to leave when Abigail says, “Here, catch!” and flings a little notecard at him. Inscribed upon it are 10 digits broken up into three segments.

“What’s this?”

“Well . . . I just thought you might want to let Will knows about my progress. Doctor to patient’s fam – I mean, friend, and all that.”

“Abigail.”

“He checked out your backside too!”

“Abigail Hobbs.”

The cheeky girl just grins at him. “Go get him, Doctor.”

Hannibal sighs, but dutifully finds himself making a long drive to Wolf Trap with an offering of fish and sausage bits for dogs as soon as his shift is over. It’s truly the start of something magical.

FINIS

## Chapter End Notes

Day 5 is "scare" and I actually have a legit idea for this, so it should be exciting. It might involve strippers. And smut. See you there! ;)

# Scare

## Chapter Summary

Will is a stripper cop who turns up to give Hannibal a show. Hannibal is the idiot who thinks he's a real cop and immediately attacks. They both learn something new.

## Chapter Notes

Warnings: Violence cuz they beat the crap out of each other and heavily implied smut

Based off of [this lovely thing](#), although I'm afraid I have no answer to the "What is Will's stripper song?" question.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

It's not like it's unnatural or anything. Doctors get stressed. Doctors have a stressful lifestyle. Therefore, when doctors go home at the end of the day and become human again, they pull out a wine bottle and settle down to fly off into drunken oblivion.

At least, that's Frederick's reasoning. He's had a rough day, okay? He just had a patient escape and an orderly arrested right in front him, screaming and foaming and fighting arrest the whole day. So when he gets home he ditches the tie and the suit and the cane and rummages around for his most expensive bottle of wine and has a pity drink.

"After all, it's not like I'm freaking Hannibal Lecter," he finds himself saying, hours later, most of the bottle gone.

The fire nods enthusiastically.

"He's so perfect I bet he doesn't even change his expression doing the dirty."

His fellow chair hums in agreement and clinks a wine glass to his bottle in commiseration.

"I bet . . . I bet I'd love to see that," Frederick says. Or thinks. He's not quite sure anymore. "Hannibal Lecter . . . getting arrested . . . doing the dirty."

The painting on the wall giggles.

"I should make it happen, yeah?"

Everyone chimes in agreement, so Frederick fishes out his cellphone and goes through the steps, giggling all the way and boosting his courage with sips of more wine, until finally he wakes up the next morning on the floor, hangover pounding painfully at his temples, and a bill in his e-mail for a beautiful man in a cop costume with entrancing blue eyes and bouncing chocolate curls. Frederick has five seconds to think that he'd happily bang this unexpected gift when he realizes that he actually ordered it to Hannibal Lecter's office.

He jerks upright, bangs his head against the table, and passes out again.

---

To say Will Graham is startled when he receives a request to go play cop versus doctor would be . . . patent and bold lie. No, seriously. It's not like Will's unaware of his looks, and since he was a cop – albeit briefly – he can accurately carry out the whole “kick down the door and arrest you” bit pretty much as it would actually happen. And doctors, man, doctors *love* that power play, especially when he handcuffs them to tables and sits on their –

Well.

Let's just say that there's a reason one of his notable accompaniments that can be ordered is “power bottom”.

So Will is thinking absolutely normal, boring, route thoughts when he pushes his way through the door to Hannibal Lecter's office and brandishes a fake warrant.

“Morning, Doctor Lecter, I happen to have a warrant for your arrest.”

Lecter looks at him like he's just spat on the man's shoes. It's a strangely powerful death glare.

Will, meanwhile, carries through the Miranda Rights, thinking, such fascinating thoughts as, *Damn, he's pretty tall when he stands up and I hope the new dogsitter is good and You know, he doesn't look half bad for a name like 'Hannibal'*. It's a typical day, and he can recite these things in his sleep.

Lecter circles around him like a shark, ever closer but still carefully away. “And you intend to follow through on this?”

“That's what they pay me for.”

Lecter sighs. Fixes his cuffs. Shuts the door. “Such a pity that our tax dollars go to such waste,” he says, and *moves like a fricking ninja*.

One minute, he's four feet away and the next he's got his arms wrapped tight around Will's throat, calmly strangling him without the slightest hint of hesitation or effort. And wow, okay, Will wasn't expecting him to commit quite so fully to the role, but he's supposed to be a power bottom, not a wilting flower, plus, you know. He was an actual cop once, even if the gun on his belt is fake.

So he jabs an elbow into the man's stomach and slams his foot into the man's shin, and when Lecter grunts, he swivels around and hip checks the man onto the floor.

They go back and forth, with Lecter unleashing brutally fast attacks and chokeholds that Will barely manages to wriggle out of. Will retaliates with every weapon in his frantically outclassed arsenal, barely managing to stay on top, sometimes even literally, when Lecter gets the upper hand and attempts to strangle him again on the floor. Will abandons dignity at that point and knees the man in the arse to send him rolling over Will's head, and then it's back at it again.

At one point, Lecter even brings in a fricking *scalpel* to the fight, leaving Will with some swipes on his chest and cheek, so Will does the reasonable thing and bites the man on the wrist so hard Lecter yelps and drops it.

Eventually, Will makes the fatal mistake of making a play for higher ground up on the second level, and Lecter catches him by the ankle and attempts to squash him via the very elegant method of sitting on his neck. Will counts it a win that the man's out of breath and has a bloody smile as he does it.

"You're really getting into this for someone who's friend is paying a lot of money," Will manages to force out, trying and failing to pinch Lecter's legs with enough force to make him release.

"I'm afraid I don't count the police force as my friends," Lecter responds, sitting harder and ignoring the pinches like they're nothing.

"I'm a stripper, you areshole!"

The crushing weight pauses. Stops.

"I beg your pardon?"

Will takes the moment, inhales a great big breath, and then flips himself to give the man a great and cathartic whack in the face.

Lecter goes down. This time he stays down.

Will massages his throat. "I'm a *stripper*, Jesus, didn't your friend tell you I was coming? God."

"I don't find myself with many whom I would count as friends," Lecter returns, examining the warrant with sharp eyes. "This is an extremely passable copy, if not for the out of date police logo and clearly transposed signature for . . . Winston Buster?"

"Making up the names is half the fun."

Lecter sighs and thumps his head back on the floor. "I suppose an apology is in order," he says, and damn him, he's still sounding as arrogant as he was when he was strangling him in the beginning.

“Damn right.”

Lecter gets up and starts making some noise about tea or bandages or something something medical something. Will ignores him, because he’s currently experiencing a blood rush south that means, hey, learn something new about yourself every day. He’d thought it was the adrenaline rush, but no, apparently he’s turned on by near death experiences. And it’s not like Lecter doesn’t cut a very fine figure, suit all messed up and hair everywhere, as he attempts to play it cool by leaning against the chair and blab about stitching Will up or some crap like that.

Besides, Will’s got a job to do.

“Nah, how about we skip the bandages,” Will interrupts, and Lecter shuts his mouth so fast his jaw clicks when Will pushes him onto the chair and proceeds to settle his weight right where he can feeling a reciprocal interest beginning to rise. “Cuz, see, your friend here ordered a show, and I can’t have you saying I failed to deliver, can I? It would be bad for my reputation.”

“Mr. Graham, I don’t think – ”

Will puts his mouth right on Lecter’s neck and bites his ear. The annoying excuses immediately stop.

“Because you see, Dr. Lecter,” Will whispers, “I think there’s something your friend didn’t tell me. I think that you liked that a lot more than you’re willing to admit. And I think that we should maybe do something about this little situation here.”

Lecter swallows, and his pupils are so dilated Will can almost see his own reflection in them. “I think you need medical care.”

Will sighs. Sometimes doctors are also the most annoying customers. “I came prepared. It’s called lube and a plug. And hello, what’s this? Oh yes, I think that’ll be quite lovely, just gotta get rid of this tiny little thing that you call pants and – ”

Lecter chokes, and Will grins victoriously from his position on top as he begins to give the doctor the ride of his life.

---

“You are not bothered?”

“By what? Come on, you’re big, but not *that* big. I can handle you.”

“You really are little piece of – ”

“Uh-uh, not in the bedroom when I’m on top.”

---

“You are not bothered by the circumstances of our meeting?”

“I startled you, you startled me. Fight or flight, and we both fought. I think fair is fair.”

“Many would not be so . . . relaxed. About this.”

“I’ve seen worse. And better, but you know, that adrenaline rush was really something. Do you think you’d mind a repeat?”

“You really are incorrigible.”

“It’s part of my charm.”

---

Frederick is finally awoken by rather loud knocking on his door. His scramble up leads to some stubbed toes, bruised shins, and another knock on the head. He takes so long that when he finally gets there, all that’s left is a big vase of mockingly bright flowers that make him squint in the already bright and painful sunlight.

There’s a card attached in Hannibal’s familiar looping writing, and Frederick can feel his fingers shaking as he opens it.

It says simply, *I thoroughly enjoyed your gift and hope to repay you with an invitation to a dinner party on the above date to our home. Hannibal Lecter.*

Frederick thinks, *I’m not dead, thank God.*

Then he thinks, *Wait, he what?*

Then he thinks, *Wait, our home?*

FINIS

## Chapter End Notes

Join me tomorrow for Day 6: "Vampires"! It will consist of grumpy Will and "I want to smell AND taste you" Hannibal.

# Vampires

## Chapter Summary

Will runs a shop for vampires to stock up on blood. Hannibal is the customer who's more interested in Will's blood than what he's selling.

## Chapter Notes

Warnings: definitely implied smut here, folks

Also . . . you know . . . when I started this journey, I was like "Okay, so no smut and around 1,000 words, and I'll be happy". And here I am sitting on top of nearly 3k in words with smut like what is my life. AKA enjoy :D

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Funnily enough, Will meets Hannibal during one of the worst arguments of his life, and if that doesn't set a precedent, he doesn't know what will.

Will is having a very carefree morning opening his shop, clearing away any small things he missed in the night, and spraying everything with air freshener because vampires have sensitive noses when Agent Jack Crawford walks in, hat in hand and mouth already running, to tell Will of "glorious opportunities" he can have with the supernatural division of the BAU.

"I turned you down three weeks ago, and I'll turn you down again today," Will says immediately, cutting Jack off. He's found it's the key to ending the debate early.

After all, once Jack gets going, he *really* gets going.

"People are dying, Will."

Will sighs. How predictable. The first time, he'd appealed to Will's sense of adventure ( "*It'll be fun, Will, you'll get a great experience!*"). The second time, he'd appealed to Will's sense of resentment ( "*Here's an opportunity to show the FBI what they're missing when they turned you down*"). Now, it seems he's finally gotten around to appealing what he thinks is Will's sense of duty towards his fellow humans.

It would be compelling, except that Will feels a greater connection with his dogs and his undead customers than his fellow humans.

“People die every day,” Will says.

Jack steps right up to the counter, bristling. Will likes to picture him as a great growly bear, tapping his claws to summon his underlings to do his will. “The Ripper has dropped seven bodies in the last month,” Jack says, not bothering to modulate his voice at all. “That means we only have two more chances to catch him before he stops. I *need* you, Will. The BAU needs you.”

Will tops off another blood jar and slides it into place beneath the display case. “Then they should’ve let me in as a teacher when I applied,” he returns mildly.

And hadn’t that been a great slap in the face. To fail the psychology screening and not be allowed in as an agent, only for his application to even just *teach* rejected flat out – and *after* they’d already dragged him in for two guest lectures about how to predict feral vampires killings.

So Will had thrown in the towel and gone into the blood business. His skills make him suited for predicting with almost pinpoint accuracy what blood mix his customers will want, and vampires are great because they don’t care that he’s weird and are willing to pay pretty high rates for his services. It means Will gets to set his own hours, run his own store without needing lots of employees, and has plenty of money to keep himself and his dogs in good keeping. More importantly, it means that most people won’t even bother trying to talk to him due to the stigma of being a blood dealer, so Will gets a free pass to have no one talk to him at all, which is sometimes the best thing of all.

“I have no control over that.”

“Yet you have control to get me reinstated as a consultant? How convenient.”

Something about his tone there sets Jack off, because he pushes right through the “employee only” gate and gets right into Will’s face. “Now you listen here, Graham,” he snarls. “People are dying, good people, innocent people, mothers and children. If you don’t help, those deaths are on your head.”

“You mean *your* head. The press isn’t ever going to bother printing about me.”

Jack swells up like a great big pufferfish. “*YOU* – ”

“Agent Crawford.”

They both pause, and Jack steps away immediately once he realizes that someone else is in the shop. It’s definitely a vampire, going by the incredibly alien stillness of his figure and unblinking eyes, although Will can’t gauge how old he is. He’s definitely not a newborn, because although most of him is dressed in a very fashionable and covering suit, his head is uncovered and the sun isn’t burning it off. But he doesn’t set off Will’s danger sense the way true ancients tend to, so Will pegs him around middle age. Between a couple centuries and a millennium, maybe.

“Dr. Lecter. Fancy seeing you here.”

Dr. Lecter steps in and lets the door fall pointedly closed. “The shop I formerly patronized has recently closed,” the vampire says mildly. “And I have heard very good things about this shop, so I thought it would be worth a trip.”

Seeing the dynamic shift almost gives Will a headache. Jack goes from the biggest growling predator in the room to a polite raven, stepping aside to let the bigger, meaner predator settle down to have the prime spot and access to the choicest bits. And yes, it’s a weird analogy, but Will’s brain is weird, and the analogy fits. Jack is even moving out of the employee-only area with his back kept carefully to the wall, like every prey animal ever.

“I was just speaking to Will here about the newest bodies on the Ripper case,” Jack says.

“So I heard.” Dr. Lecter inclines his head to the door and pointedly steps to one side. “I shall see you in your office tomorrow for our meeting?”

The doctor’s voice raises, but his gaze is flat and unyielding, and in them, Will sees no question at all. It is a statement.

And Jack – the wonder of all wonders – *obeys*.

For a long moment, there is only ringing silence in between them.

“Um,” Will says eloquently.

The doctor’s entire face shifts. Will would say it softens, but only human faces soften. A vampire’s face sort of . . . just . . . moves, slightly, like how a human might cross their legs. Different, but just as likely to return to the default setting, and not really an indication of their mood or what they might say next.

“Good afternoon. I was recommended to try an omnivore mix.”

And just like that, Will’s brain kicks back to start. He scans the doctor and sees old world money with new world respect and modern appeal. This vampire’s adapted and thriving, even if he still feels the primal urges of all his kind. And yeah, normally an omnivore mix *is* what Will would recommend to a vampire who’s adapted like that, because it’s less likely to offend human sensibilities of friends, but something in Will whispers *danger danger* so he steps away from the omnivore mixes and over to the carnivore cases.

“For anyone else? Yeah, maybe. For you? Definitely not.”

The doctor looks mildly scandalized. “You presume to tell your customers what is going to be to their preference and liking?”

Will tugs out a case of lion blood and thumps it down on the counter. “It’s what they pay me for,” he says. “Anyone who recommended my shop would’ve told you that. And tell me that this doesn’t smell better than an omnivore mix.”

“It . . . does,” Lecter says, with great reluctance.

Will raises his hands. "If you don't like, I'll refund you and give you an omnivore mix," he promises. "But something tells me you've been missing out big time. Predator carnivores . . . they're going to be a good choice for you."

"Says who?"

"You."

The doctor raises an eyebrow. "Me?"

"Yeah, you." Will gestures at him. "You're strong, you're fast, you're experienced but not so old that people think you're ancient. You're old world, so the idea of being the top of the food chain is there, but you can't have humans, so carnivores are the next best bet. Plus you look just old enough to actually have, you know, sampled human blood, so I imagine that omnivore blood was a way to get you off the craving for human blood because it tastes so different and some people think that carnivore blood is too close and tempts vampires to turn feral."

"And does it?"

Will snorts. "You drink blood. Of course you're tempted. The kind of blood mix you buy has nothing to do with that."

That earns him a cocked head and pursed lips. "So you subscribe to the philosophy that vampires and humans are equal in morality? Killers inside of all of us, with only our minds and society's rules to hold us back?"

"You were human once, right?"

". . . A very, very long time ago," Lecter says quietly, sniffing at the lion blood again.

"You're a killer, I'm a killer," Will says. "We all are. Just in different ways."

"Oh?"

"Just take the blood and try it," Will says in exasperation, pushing the case so that the vampire has to take it or risk getting blood all over his clothes. "You'll like it or you won't, go and try it. It won't kill you. I promise there's no dead man's blood in it."

Lecter smiles at that, and with a wave he pays and leaves.

---

Will doesn't expect to see Lecter much after that. If he hated the blood, he'd find a new shop, and if he liked it, well, Will also does online orders and Lecter looks like he has the money to do all of his shopping online.

Which is why he's so startled when two days later, Lecter comes back.

"Uh," Will says.

“Your recommendation was . . . surprisingly delightful,” Lecter says grudgingly. “I imagine you have more?”

“Um.”

Lecter holds out a hand. “I think you should probably call me Hannibal.”

---

It becomes a ritual after that. Every three or four days, Hannibal comes back, eyes shining, to try a new carnivore mix. He also insists on a handshake every single time, which Will eventually just learns to deal with. His dogs even get used to the scent of vampire on him eventually, which Will just sort of sighs at.

“Some guard dogs you are,” he says sadly, when he finds Buster making a nest out of Will’s shirt the day after Hannibal had decided that yes, Will absolutely needed help getting up and down the ladder. With both hands. And some sniffing.

Buster is unrepentant, and to add insult to injury, refuses to relinquish the shirt.

---

Then comes the day that Hannibal walks in on Will throwing a customer out.

“Please, Will, please, I’m so sorry, just give me another chance, I won’t do it again, Will, please – augh!”

Will kicks the vampire in the groin again and slams the door. It’s lined with dead man’s blood and special enchantments, so vampires can’t just force their way inside without Will’s consent, and he takes great glee in watching the vampire toddle off, cursing and wincing.

This time, it’s Hannibal’s turn to venture a soft, “Um?”

“I have a strict hands-off-the-human rule,” Will explains, panting slightly. “You touch me, you go. Especially if you try to glamour me.”

“He attempted to glamour you? And you are still standing?”

“Yeah, so . . . glammers don’t work on me.”

“Oh?”

“Nope.” Will takes a long swallow of water and sits down. He thinks Hannibal will excuse the rudeness, given that he’s twitching to come ascertain that Will is okay. Hannibal is weird like that. “I have a heightened empathetic ability, and good, long-lasting glammers require sustained eye contact. So if anyone tries, I generally get the glamour *and* whatever the vampire is feeling, so it makes it easy to shake off. No one goes into a glamour thinking good things. At least not to me.”

“No?”

And suddenly, like vampire magic, Hannibal’s right in his face.

“Because, Will Graham, you. You smell delightful,” Hannibal purrs, sniffing at him like he’s a particularly tasty air freshener. “I think you would taste even better than mongoose blood.”

Will blinks. For some reason, the only protect he can conjure up is, “But mongoose blood is your favorite.”

Hannibal settles his face into the crook of Will’s neck and inhales, so strongly that Will’s shirt actually shifts from the force of the breeze. He hums a little content noise, and it’s strangely . . . not uncomfortable. Like he feels the urge to push back, let Hannibal explore a little more, like two magnets drawn together.

“And I eat fish. You hate fish.”

Hannibal laughs. “Oh dear William,” he says and backs off. His eyes are wide and brilliant, and Will, looking into them, feels a little bit like Alice looking down the rabbit hole, except that he knows it’s an unending descent into madness.

“Let me taste you, dearest,” Hannibal says, and there’s the glamour.

Except.

Except, there’s no disgust there. No pity. No contempt for Will’s puny humanness. From Hannibal, Will feels only adoration and curiosity and above all a burning desire to possess, to hold and cherish and protect and destroy and burn and collect. Hannibal is almost *obsessed* with him, and he wants anything and everything Will could possibly give. He wants to eat Will’s heart and consume Will’s brain and rip out Will’s soul to carry it within him. He wants to drain the very rivers of Will’s body dry. He wants to feast on Will’s flesh. He wants to carve Will’s bones into jewelry to carry with him. He wants Will so much that Will, for the first time, almost feels like he’s something more than just a messy, clumsy, out of place human.

And maybe Alice did know what she was getting into. Maybe she fell despite that, because she knew, as Will does, that sometimes falling is half the fun.

So Will for the first time in his life lets the glamour take hold, lets his brain start pumping out the dopamine and other hormones, let blood rush south and pleasure light up his brain, and manages to feebly gasp out, “Do it.”

Hannibal’s whole face contorts with glee, and in between one breath and the next, he’s sinking his fangs into Will’s jugular.

Will screams, fingers clawing into Hannibal’s unforgiving skin as the vampire drinks from him in deep, lengthy draws, each one longer than the last, a wave of pleasure crashing over him with each pull until Will is dizzy, unable to prepare for the next wave so that each knocks him over, leaves him breathless, makes his heart beat so fast he’s almost afraid it’ll stop.

“Hannibal,” he whines, “*Hannibal*.”

Something in the feral animal in front of him acknowledges the plea, and Hannibal paws clumsily at his pants until Will chokes anew at the feel of cold vampire flesh against his own burning desire, caught between two pleasures and bouncing back and forth, unable to settle, desperate and eager and on fire with the force of it as every bit of prey instinct in him realizes how close he is to the edge.

And suddenly, somehow, Hannibal's disengaged, in front of him, fangs bloody and eyes fierce, growling and snarling but so tender. "Come for me, Will," he says, soft as a whisper but almost too loud for Will's overtaxed system. "Come for me, you beautiful boy, I want to taste you when you come, that's it, darling, *come for me.*"

The second glamour takes hold, and Will screams louder than before, joyous and pained and feverish, as Hannibal sinks his fangs in for his fill.

---

"Ow."

"My apologies."

"That . . . really . . . hurt."

"The enzymes in my saliva shall ensure a speedy recovery."

"Awesome . . . Hey . . . why are there . . . two of you?"

"That's just your head, my dear."

"Oh . . . It's probably . . . a good thing . . . that you're . . . a doctor . . . then. Are you going . . . to nurse me . . . back to . . . health . . . now?"

"It's only polite."

"Naw . . . Cuz . . . You . . . really . . . really . . . liked that."

"So I did."

"I think . . . I think . . . I liked . . . it too. . ."

"Oh, my darling Will. I do think I'm going to keep you."

FINIS

## Chapter End Notes

So legit the story of me writing this fic was me doing the outline and going, "Okay, so we're gonna end with you sniffing Will, okay? For comedic effect and reusing the sniffing line because it never gets old" and Hannibal was like "But I wanna touch him"

so I was like "Okay, fine, you can touch him while you sniff" and the next thing I knew, Hannibal had his fangs in Will's neck and I was like "Hannibal wtf we weren't supposed to go past the sniffing stage" and Hannibal was like "WILL IS MINE KEEP WRITING OR ELSE" and therein lies the story of why Hannibal ends up with his hands down Will's pants. Sorry not sorry.

Also . . . don't ask me what type of vampire Hannibal is. He's kinda an amalgamation of many different canons I've seen or read, cuz I have trouble keeping werewolf and vampire canons straight. My bad.

Join me tomorrow for Day 7: Fake blood! It will consist of confused newbie vampire Will and sneaky doing-illegal-things-behind-Will's-back Hannibal. IDK if there will be smut again, but I was pretty damn sure there would be no smut here and look what happened. So. See you there!

# Fake Blood

## Chapter Summary

Hannibal is the owner of a prestigious synthesized blood shop with an impeccable reputation and a desire to see how vampires would react to real human blood. Will is the newborn who wanders in and becomes Hannibal's latest experiment.

## Chapter Notes

Warnings: implied murder and other bad things to poor Ripper victims

I swear to god, first Hannibal, and now Will, they just won't shut up! So here's three times the 1,000 word ficlet this was supposed to be.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Hannibal finds the newborn sitting on his curb, and to be honest the only reason he notices is exactly because he's a newborn.

With a newly turned vampire, for the first few days, they are indescribably appealing to anyone who might see them. They smell nice, they glow with health and beauty, their voice is beyond words, and even if they're the rudest person on earth, most people are so dazzled by the smell and the sight and the sound that they'll just run with it.

Most scientists think that it's a symptom of vampiric evolution. There used to be a lot of wars with vampires, with so many covens slaughtered that even the oldest and most "civilized" would regularly wipe out everyone, newborn to eldest, that now newborns are extremely cherished. The vampires waged war so efficiently they almost effectively wiped out the genes for those who could survive the turning, and now every single vampire who is successfully turned is cherished and adored, even by a coven's worst enemy. So newborns evolved to be appealing, the same way human babies evolved to be cute, just to allow for the survival of the species.

After all, the humans who lack the proper genes, who mutate in ways that aren't vampiric, who become something other than a vampire . . . Well.

*They* are truly the stuff of nightmares.

So although Hannibal would normally disregard any vampire – he's well equipped to defend himself and interacts with a rather large client base – he notices this one because, well, he's a

newborn and newborns are noticeable.

When Hannibal inhales, he smells *dogwood* and *oil* and *dust* and, most peculiar of all, *dog*. His eyes are almost plastered to the newborn's curls, which in his right mind he would call brown, but under the influence of newborn appeal, he would say are lovely curls of chocolate, rich and flowing and beautiful. His face is appealing too, as he has just enough human blood for his skin to retain the color and illusion of warmth, and his eyes are even still their human color, although much more vividly blue than they probably were as a human.

He is indescribably lovely, and Hannibal is seized with the desire to tuck him under his coat and protect him from harm.

Except, at that moment, the newborn registers his presence and looks up, and the gaze is so alien in its stillness that Hannibal immediately snaps out of it. Even as a newborn, this one could tear Hannibal apart with ease. He does not need protection.

"Good morning," Hannibal says politely.

The newborn looks at his feet. "I, um. I need um. Blood."

"I beg your pardon?"

The newborn snarls and scratches his fingers into the cement, digging deep furrows, only to retract his hands in horror as he realizes what he did. "Sorry, sorry, I just – I'm – this is all – I don't know what I'm doing," he says hurriedly. "I just, I think, I need blood, my head, it won't stop moving, I don't, I don't know what to do."

"Where is your maker?" Hannibal asks. Generally, vampire makers stay rather close to newborns for at least a month – although most stay for much longer – providing food, protection, and knowledge to ensure their childe's survival.

The newborn snarls again, although he apparently doesn't even realize he's doing it. "I ran away."

Hannibal raises an eyebrow. Newborns are all precious. No vampire would even think to deny any newborn whatever he or she wanted, unless, of course, it violated the laws of the Truce. "Was your maker abusive?"

"Just give me some blood, damn it."

*Rude*, a part of Hannibal's mind sing-songs, but unfortunately, the newborn effect still has power. This one, however rude, will not be dinner.

Besides. Even newborn vampires, still more human than vampire, come out rather . . . tasteless. No matter how much seasoning or baking or feeding Hannibal attempts, and he's made plenty of attempts.

So Hannibal sighs, stands up, and allows the newborn to trail him like a slightly lost and very intense puppy. He at least has the manners not to touch anything or go near the restricted areas, but Hannibal can practically smell him drooling with want over the racks and racks of

neatly stacked bottles of synthesized blood. Synthesized blood is all the rage now, since it's a supposedly more ethical and sustainable source of food for the growing vampire class, although everyone admits it isn't quite the same as human blood, but far easier to provide and obtain than their preferred food source or even the "vegetarian" animal blood sources. Hannibal has gained a hard-won reputation for synthesized blood mixes that are almost indistinguishable from real blood, although whenever he asks his answer is always a quiet wink and no words.

Although, since his shop isn't open, some of his equipment and new mixes are out in the open, still marinating from overnight, which is probably also why this newborn is so caught up that he's actually drooling.

Hannibal takes out his book of records and flips to a new page. "May I enquire as to your name?"

"Why do you need that?"

"My blood mixes are custom made, for the most part," Hannibal replies patiently. "I keep track of what is favorable to you and what is not, so that even if I must substitute a mix whilst making a new batch, you will not receive something that you find detestable."

"Custom . . . what, no, I just need some blood," the newborn protests, gaping at him.

"That is not quite how my business runs, I'm afraid."

The newborn flails at him like he's like the capacity for words. "I don't even have any money to pay you with!"

"Then how were you planning to obtain the blood you need?"

The newborn flushes a violent red. It's less of a statement than one thinks; as the newborn stage fades, they'll use up what little remains of their own human blood as their new vampire system kicks in, and from then on they'll be completely dependent on blood they feed. But for now, what little is left making a startling splash of red against his pale face. "I . . . didn't really think it through."

Hannibal closes his book with a reluctant sigh of amusement. For anyone else, it would be rude, but for this one . . . it's somewhat charming, actually.

"How about this?" Hannibal asks, eyeing his newest mix. It does need tasting before he starts selling it. "I will make you a deal. I shall provide the blood you need in exchange for you testing the new mixes I create."

" . . . You can't test them yourself?"

"I could. But I am not a vampire. My palate is not nearly as sensitive as yours to the subtle changes in the taste of the blood mix, and so I do require some testing before release."

"What's the catch?" the newborn asks suspiciously.

*Well, at least his brain has not suffered irreparable damage,* Hannibal finds himself thinking.

“I still need your name.”

The newborn eyes him, but apparently in whatever system of friend-or-foe judgment this vampire is using, he passes muster, because the newborn manages to find the nerve to offer a hand to shake as he finally introduces himself by saying, “Will Graham.”

“Hannibal Lecter,” Hannibal returns. “Now, *this* is a mix I brewed just last night. Tell me what the first thing you smell is.”

---

Slowly, as the days and weeks pass, Hannibal finds himself with an incredible increase in new mixes. Most of it he lays at the feet of his wonderful new blood tester, as the feedback comes back must faster and more reliable from the mouth of Will than the mouth of unwilling dinner companions, but most of it comes from Will himself. Once Hannibal manages to get past the incredibly prickly exterior, Will is rather inspiring, to the point that Hannibal even finds himself taking up doodling whilst he brews new mixes late into the night. Or early into the very early morning, even.

Will himself even blossoms under the relationship. Hannibal’s constant barrage of questions encourages Will to acquaint himself with his new abilities and senses, as well as honing his control. Now the newborn no longer hunches and scuttles quickly around, but walks with confidence and calm. It makes Will all the more charming.

It’s quite the example of a mutually symbiotic relationship. Will gets the blood he needs and the gentle social guidance into the world of vampires whilst Hannibal gets accurate blood testing and an insight into what makes vampires tick.

“Did you put *seaweed* into this?” Will exclaims, pushing the cup away from him like it’s poison.

“Kelp, actually. Why? Was it truly so distasteful?”

Will scrunches up his face. “Just . . . weird. Where do you even get half of these ingredients?”

“I told you, I have an appetite for exploration.”

“That isn’t an answer.”

Hannibal takes note of the speed and strength of Will’s reaction. He’s getting faster and freer with his likes and dislikes, which means that Will has gained the honor of his own special notebook, which is almost full with every little quirk Hannibal’s managed to notice and write down about his newborn. Will never notices, as Hannibal is careful to write in his own special brand of Lithuanian shorthand, but it doesn’t really matter, since the most important details are kept safe in the growing greenhouse inside the grounds of Hannibal’s mind palace.

“True,” Hannibal says.

Will groans and lets his face flop onto the table. “Fine. Be cryptic,” Will says sulkily, half muffled. “I’m done for the day anyways.”

“So you are. Give me a few minutes to gather your payment.”

“Blah blah blah.”

“Will.”

“I’m sorry, would you like it in French?”

“You’re more than welcome to try. I have not had the opportunity to practice my French in quite a few years.”

“I thought you spoke Italian!”

“That too.”

“ . . . How many languages do you speak?”

“Lithuanian, French, Italian, Russian, some Spanish and German I picked up in my travels. And English, of course.”

“I . . . I’m not even going to ask. By the way . . .”

“Yes?”

Will lifts his head up. “Did you add something new to my blood mix?”

“No. Why?”

“I don’t know. It’s just been . . . better, these past few days.”

Hannibal sets the travel package of Will’s blood mix on the table, purposefully brushing aside some of Will’s curls and luxuriating in the feel of the chocolate curls sliding like silk over his fingers. “Perhaps your senses are beginning to settle. Your sense of taste was always rather exquisite.”

“Who even says things like that? Oh yeah, you.”

Hannibal laughs. He hadn’t realized how little he laughed until Will wandered into his life. “Go home, William. I shall see you next week.”

---

Hannibal meets with Will three times a week on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, which is why he’s rather startled when the door flies open on a late Saturday night and Will comes stomping in, face contorted into an angelic snarl as he dashes down the stairs to the basement where Hannibal is brewing his latest case of Will’s blood mix. He comes right up to Hannibal and actually slams him into the wall, displacing the carefully arranged bags of blood on the counter.

“William, I do believe I said the basement was off-limits,” Hannibal chides.

Will snarls, louder than before. “You *liar!*”

“I beg your pardon?”

Will closes his eyes, sticks his face into Hannibal’s neck, and inhales. This time, when his eyes open, they are bright blood red, the human-blue washed completely out as if he’s recently fed. Hannibal feels the slightest pang of surprise and disappointment.

“You fucking liar, Hannibal Lecter,” Will says, tightening his hands on where he’s pushing Hannibal into the wall. “It’s you.”

“Me?”

“Yes, you! You added real human blood to my synthesized mix!”

Hannibal can feel his heart start to beat. Maybe Will hasn’t fed recently off of some random person. Maybe Will has actually . . . “That is illegal. Why would I – ”

“Don’t you even start,” Will interrupts. “I know you, you always want to push and push and *push*. You wanted to see how vampires would react to real human blood, and you made *me* the guinea pig with *your* blood. You drained your own blood just to see if I would notice!”

“Now, dear Will,” Hannibal says. “Why would I do that?”

Will’s face contorts even further, and this time when he pushes against Hannibal, he actually lifts him clear off his feet in his rage. “Because you wanted me addicted to your blood, you *arsehole!* And you know what?”

Hannibal doesn’t even respond. How can he? How can he, when his voice is stolen by the beauty that is Will, as a fully fledged vampire, blood red eyes and snarling and gorgeous in his fury, a true creature of the night? How can he, when all he can smell is the mix of flowers and wood and oil and dog fur that is Will, now irrevocably mixed with Hannibal’s own scent? How can he, when all he can think about is how Will is lifting Hannibal with superhuman strength born of Hannibal’s blood, running through Will’s veins and empowering him with vampire strength and speed? Will is his greatest treasure, his loveliest creation, his most precious experiment.

“Let’s see how much *you* like it!” Will spits out, and the next thing Hannibal knows, he’s writhing helplessly in Will’s unbreakable grip, screaming, as Will drains him in fast, desperate pulls, a feral creature of lost humanity as he gives in to his desire.

*Oh my beautiful monster*, Hannibal thinks fuzzily, and then he thinks no more.

---

“So . . . that . . . may have been impulsive.”

Hannibal flicks his eyes open and leaps off the bed.

Except.

Except, for some reason, when he pushes off, he doesn't flip over to land on his feet. No, he flips head over heels, bounces off of the ceiling, and lands like a cat on all fours, so startled that it takes a millisecond before he recovers and stands up straight again.

Hannibal is in a small room, on a bare bed dotted with well-worn dog beds facing a series of windows. He inhales and smells dog and human and dust and, most importantly of all, he smells Will, darling, dear Will, who somehow smells even lovelier and enchanting and addicting than he did before.

Which leads him to where Will is sitting on the floor, a mix of guilt and relief on his face.

Hannibal licks over his teeth. He can feel the sharpened canines that descend into fangs, and well, that's one question answered. "You turned me into a vampire," he says, and it's not a question.

Will blushes again. "I might have been a tad impulsive," he repeats.

Hannibal can't help beaming at the thought of Will, running entirely on Hannibal's blood in his veins, draining Hannibal until the very last drops and then allowing his true venom to seep into Hannibal's veins to begin a reciprocal process that lead them to here, in his small house, with two newborns bathed in moonlight.

Will thunks his head against the wall. "God, and you're pleased by that, aren't you."

"Everything you do pleases me," Hannibal replies.

"You're so weird. Also." Will opens one eye and fixes him with a stern glare. "No more putting ignorant people's blood in blood mixes."

Hannibal blinks.

"Yeah, I know about that. Big surprise – you're the infamous Chesapeake Ripper. I wrote a dissertation on you, you really think I wouldn't know who you are?"

"Yet I see no FBI waiting to arrest me."

"No cell on earth could hold you," Will huffs. "What would be the point?"

Hannibal tenses. His mind can see where this is going, and it leaves him with distinctively sour taste in his mouth. "And so now, as my maker, you will force me to abide by the human laws of morality?"

"What?" Will's mouth falls open, and he seems – and smells – genuinely shocked. "No! Also, I can't."

Hannibal pauses. Listens. There is no deception in Will's heartbeat. He lets himself relax, and pads carefully over to sit next to Will, barely suppressing a shiver as Will leans his head against Hannibal's shoulder, his curls brushing over Hannibal's skin.

“I was under the impression that makers could exert some measure of control over their newborns.”

“Well, yes. But that measure of control is more about a vampire’s age than status as a creator. I’m not old enough to really have any kind of control over you, or anyone really. We’re too close in age, and also I didn’t create you with the intent of controlling you. Intent matters.”

“I see.” Hannibal dares to wrap an arm around Will, and is thrilled when Will just grunts and shifts to allow the embrace. “So when did you realize who I was?”

“Day one.” Will sighs. “See, becoming a vampire comes with things besides being faster and all that. Most of the regular bloodlines were wiped out during the wars, so most of us who successfully turn do so because we’re from a special bloodline from somewhere way back when. This means that generally we were protected because we turned into special children.”

“Special meaning . . .”

“Gifted. Weird. Precious. I dunno, pick one.”

“And you believe yourself among these talented ones?”

“I know I am.” Will’s tone has no pride, just weary resignation, and Hannibal almost wants to pinch him. There is no question in Hannibal’s mind that Will is gifted and precious and special. “I used to be pretty empathetic, when I was human. Now I just . . . look, and bam, there’s everything I want to know, laid out for all to see.”

“I see.”

They sit in silence for a little while longer, although Hannibal finds that his sense of time is rather warped now – which makes sense, given his now indefinitely extended lifespan – so he can’t really judge the passage of time except to attempt to measure the angle of moonlight.

“So what now?” Hannibal says, nuzzling carefully into Will’s curls. Will seems to have accepted their new closeness, and in fact has contorted himself to curl up within Hannibal’s arms, mouthing distractedly in return at Hannibal’s neck where he seems fixated on the spot where he drained Hannibal’s blood and changed the very nature of Hannibal’s being.

Will sighs gustily. “I should probably bring you to my maker. I’m pretty sure I need to tell someone that I’ve made a vampire.”

“I hope that you are not intending to be rid of me.”

“ . . . No, I think you’re stuck with me,” Will says guiltily. “Although I’m still not drinking the blood you harvest as the Ripper.”

“Hmm. As you say.”

“Shut up.”

---

They start off to the house of Will's maker early the day after, since they spent most of the day following Hannibal's transformation cuddling and dozing in Will's bed, interrupted only when they have to feed or Will had to take care of his pack of seven rather enthusiastic dogs, who seem not to care that a higher predator is their alpha. Hannibal gives up his pants as a lost cause and they make a stop at Hannibal's house so that he can dress them both appropriately, leading to much eye-rolling and grumbling by Will, although he sweetens up when Hannibal kisses him once. Or twice. Okay, five times. Maybe seven.

Hannibal recognizes the house immediately, although he says nothing and wait silently for the inevitable explosion.

"Will. How – what have you done."

"Huh?"

"Hello, Bedelia. So nice to see you again."

"Wait a minute!" Will whirls and stabs Hannibal in the chest with his finger. Now that he's not holding back, Hannibal can feel the full force of Will's vampire strength, although, as a fellow newborn, it doesn't actually hurt. "You two *know each???*"

Bedelia, at the same time, says, outraged, "You made *Hannibal Lecter* into a vampire?!?!?"

Hannibal smiles. He has a feeling that it is going to be a good day today.

FINIS

## Chapter End Notes

Tomorrow is Day 8: Woods! Join me if you're interested in a return to fluffy alternate meetings. With hopefully less murder and bloodshed. Although it might begin with a meeting over a murder scene. So.

Also, so the story of this ficlet is that I took the "vampire" prompt and ran with it simultaneously as if Hannibal was the vampire and Will was the vampire, hence the very loosely "fake blood" part of today's Hannictober offering. Oops.

Finally, for research purposes: What Hogwarts House(s) do you think Alana and Margot would be in? No, seriously, I wanna know, cuz there may or may not be a Hogwarts ficlet coming up in this collection. Not tomorrow tho. Or the day after. Sometime before Day 31. Tell me in a comment or message me on tumblr please :D

# Woods

## Chapter Summary

Will hasn't set foot outside the castle in over twenty years, so the very first time he manages to escape, he heads straight for the woods, only to meet something - or someone - who's been waiting patiently for a very long time for the best chance to strike.

## Chapter Notes

Warnings: Chilton being an asshole, Margot being abused by her brother, general abuse towards Will

Did I say fluffy alternate meetings? Because Hannibal looked at me and just laughed and said, "Fsch that, it's Halloween". AKA this is a lot less fluffy than I originally planned. Like a crapton less fluffy.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Will is dreaming. He's dreaming about a picnic in the forest, next to a bubbling stream and amidst lush green grass, with his parents beside him. His father is lounging on his left, tossing lines into the water and hoping for fish to bite, as his mother arranges the flowers in her lap in crowns to press upon Will's head.

Will knows it's a dream, but not for the reason one might think.

Will knows it's a dream not because of the presence of his long-dead parents, but because the grass and trees are present.

Will hasn't left the inside of the castle for over twenty years. He honestly doesn't really remember what trees and grass look like. After the first time he'd showed off his empathetic abilities at a passing fair as a child, the great king Frederick Chilton had knocked down his door and dragged him off, pushing aside his protesting parents. Chilton had locked him in the lowest dungeon – although admittedly in a fairly comfortable cell – and told him that it was all for his own protection, and to protect the kingdom from enemies who might seek to use Will against their people.

Will knows his parents probably tried to appeal the decision, but Will also never saw his parents again.

Nowadays, Will only ever leaves the castle when there's a particularly confusing or troubling murder to be solved, and he leaves only under heavy guard. He's also generally hobbled and tied up like a trussed pig, blindfolded and gagged and deafened by ear plugs. They don't even let him walk out; he's carried by guards, so he can't memorize the route out, and even when they take the blindfold off so he can see the crime scene, he always has at least four guards on him – two holding his arms, one holding a chain to his arms, and one further off ready to tackle him just in case.

And, quite unfortunately for Will, there hasn't been a murder in the past six months. So he's been limited to his two rooms and his courtyard. Which isn't so much a courtyard as a room that they converted into a fake garden, complete with fake plants and a fake painted ceiling.

Will is awoken, as he is every day, by the Lady Margot. They've come to a silent understanding in the way only people who are imprisoned by invisible chains are, and so Will makes no protest and goes where she tells him to. Margot's brother traded her service for access to Will and the river that provides his pig empire with food, so she spends her days adorning Chilton's court and tending to Will, because she can't escape either and she can't help Will escape because she too has never left the castle.

"You have a visitor today," Margot tells him quietly over breakfast.

They eat together because Chilton always sends extra – mustn't starve our guests, according to him – and Margot's brother doesn't give two rats about her so he doesn't bother sending a stipend for her food. So after a day or two together, Will had simply started shoving plates at her, and they'd started eating together.

"Who is it?"

Margot grimaces slightly, which is all the answer he needs.

"Have they cleared a room for him?"

"Yes."

Will curses under his breath. Mason Verger makes a point of visiting at least once a month, to bask in how eagerly Chilton falls at his feet, to prove his hold over Margot, and to make grabby hands at Will. Sometimes, when they're lucky, he only stays for half a day and leaves after making a point, but other times, if they prepare a room, it means he's going to stay at least three or four days.

"What time?"

Margot carefully moves the platter of sausages farther along the table, and Will stares at her with his fork hovering where the plate had been. "He said he would like to see you as soon as you finish breakfast," she says, and that explains why she'd moved so slow this morning and keeps interfering when he tries to get food.

Will takes a deep breath. Okay. Until breakfast. He can work with that. "Well, worst comes to worst, I can vomit up my breakfast on him."

It earns him a tiny smile.

“Guard!” Will says, and like magic one appears to stand by his side. Again, Chilton’s warped sense of hospitality on display, because “I’m not a savage, of course I could not leave you bereft of whatever you would desire, you are my guest, dearest William.”

“What do you want?”

Will doesn’t let the brusqueness bother him. The guards are changed frequently to avoid getting attached, and although they aren’t allowed to hurt him (unless he tries to escape), they also aren’t allowed to talk to him like a normal person, really. He’s their prisoner, not someone they are there to serve.

“I want all the flowers in the vases changed,” Will says. “And don’t you dare try to have anyone but Margot get them, you lot always get it wrong.”

Margot makes a grab for his arm, her eyes wide, but Will ignores her. Will has dozens of flower vases around the room at Chilton’s bequest to keep things fresh and pretty in the absence of windows, and to change the flowers she’ll have to be escorted to the greenhouses on the far side of the castle grounds, because the actual castle gardens are outside the walls where Margot cannot go, so this seemingly minor and innocuous request will take up almost her entire day. It’ll keep her out of Mason’s path, which is all Will cares about.

The guard nods and calls a second guard, and Margot is dragged out, still whispering protests that Will pretends not to hear. He can deal with her anger later, and it’ll be far better than watching her walk around pretending the bruises are because she had an accident with a door.

After breakfast, Will is immediately blindfolded and carried to his viewing room. Chilton decreed that the location of his chambers was a vital secret to the security of the kingdom, so since no one can meet him there, Will gets his own viewing room, although it still has no windows and he’s still carried there because he isn’t supposed to know the route.

For each new visitor, it’s generally redecorated, presumably so that no visitor can memorize it or hide things Will can use as a weapon, but really it’s because Mason is an over-controlling show-off.

This time, he’s gone minimalist, just some tasteful green sofas and banners hung on the wall with the Verger insignia, and of course, The Chair.

Normally, Will is just chained via ankle and wrist in the viewing room, and generally it has a long chain so he can pace as he thinks. For Mason, though, and especially when Cordell is there, Will is full on tied down in a specially made device that all the guards call The Chair. It has chains for his ankles, wrists, chest, and sometimes even his neck and head if Mason is feeling particularly cruel. This is mostly due to the fact that once Will lost his temper and took a clean bite out of Cordell after he’d said some rude things about Margot, so although Mason was delighted by the show of personality, he’s also a coward, so now Will is tied down so he can’t ever repeat the feat. Will usually doesn’t regret it.

“Hello, Will Graham,” Cordell says, beaming, which stretches the tell-tale scar on his cheek.

Will doesn't say anything back. Mostly because Cordell waited until he opened his mouth and then shoved a gag in that he immediately strapped to the back of the chair.

"Now, now, don't be angry," Cordell says, patting at his cheek like he's a misbehaving puppy. "Lord Verger just wishes to speak and have you listen, and we all know that if your mouth was free, you'd shout over him, wouldn't you? So this is for everyone's benefit."

Will bites into the gag and relives the day he'd bitten out Cordell's cheek.

Mason arrives with a flurry of cold air and an ostentatious whirl.

"Oh, and you're already dressed up! You shouldn't have, it's just me, you know," he trills, so overly happy that Will almost tries to get up and run away. "And my goodness, aren't you beautiful! You know, from the first time I met you, I told dear Frederick you'd be a heart-breaker, and don't you know, I was right! You – Cordell, stop it! Bring my gift!"

"Your Majesty," Cordell says promptly, and leaves.

Will freezes. Cordell had been in the middle of affixing the last chain, which ties his left wrist to his left ankle. It usually ensures that he can't lean forward to simply unchain himself, but now it's been sloppily done.

So sloppily, in fact, that Will could almost just . . . pull free.

He's broken out of this pleasant thought when Mason proceeds to come over and start tilting his face this way and that.

"I do so love visiting you, Will," Mason coos. "You just are the perfect person to hear anything I want to say, because, well, there's no one you could possibly ever tell! And you're such a lovely person to look at too. I'm so glad they stop cutting your hair so short, it truly is lovelier in curls like this."

Will tenses, but Mason simply leans forward and licks wetly at a curl.

"I do wonder if I might have Chilton send me a lock or two," Mason muses. "I think it'd go lovely in my collection. But! Enough of that, let's talk about me, shan't we? I brought you a gift, you know, you should be grateful. I think it'll . . . lighten things up, shall we say? Although dear me, wherever did Cordell go, it wasn't that far. . . . Oh yes! And my gift comes with an even better surprise, did I mention that? I've arranged for some *lessons*."

Mason pauses here, like he actually expects Will to respond.

Will just imagines biting Mason.

"Oh silly me," Mason giggles, "I should explain myself. See, I just bought you a hawk, darling Will, I do love birds, and don't you? And well, might as well teach you how to hawk while we're at it? How does that sound, hmm? Someday we'll go outside and – "

There's a commotion outside the door, and Cordell comes flying in, waving his arms around, as an enormous tawny hawk follows him, cawing contemptuously and pecking at his face.

“Cordell! What is that?”

“I don’t know, sir!” Cordell gasps, darting this way and that to get away from the bird. “It just – it got out of the cage, I don’t know – ow! I don’t know how!”

“Cordell!”

But whatever Mason wants to say dies a quick death, since the bird makes a beeline for Will and proceeds to perch on his shoulder. When Cordell comes closer, it mantles his wings menacingly, but otherwise it seems content to sit and make soft sounds in Will’s ear. It’s feathers are surprisingly soft against Will’s face.

“Well . . . fine,” Mason decides. “We’ll go with that. Leave us, Cordell.”

Mason continues blathering about himself, talking about his latest joust and the latest maiden come to court him and trying to make rather rude comments about Margot, but Will blots his out. He’s used to it, Mason never really changes his content whenever he comes to visit, and besides, Will is more interested in the hawk, which is taking the time to preen the wing closest to Will’s ear.

Only . . . it’s not preening.

With every movement, Will feels the gag slip and slide just a little, almost like the bird is . . . loosening it. On purpose.

Emboldened, Will starts working on the loose chain Cordell left, and he’s rewarded when it lands on the floor with a thump, leaving his left side free. A few more moments against the other chain, and his right side is just about free too.

The hawk pauses then, and stares at him with bright red eyes, unblinking, and Will opens his mouth to thank it only to see the gag fall away because the hawk’s worried so much at it whilst preening.

Mason startles, but before he can say anything, the hawk leaps into the air and flies right at him, and Mason turns tail and slams face first into the wall where he’d been elaborating the new insignia of the banner there. He falls to the floor, unconscious before he can even make a sound, and Will scrabbles hurriedly at his chains until for the first time in as long as he can remember, he’s finally free.

“Can you – I want to go outside,” Will says, and he doesn’t care how stupid he sounds talking to a *bird*, this bird just managed to free him of all of his chains.

The bird leaps into the air again, somehow regal beyond compare, and nips affectionately at his ear as it swoops over him before turning and diving towards the door. Will follows, because it’s not like he has any better ideas.

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“Stop him!”

“Stop that man!”

“Someone grab him!”

Will dashes through the palace, laughing madly, as guards all around him startle to their feet and start giving chase. He’s got the headstart and the momentum, though, and the giant hawk in front of him means that more people stop to stare than actually try to help, so he’s actually out of the first set of castle gates and into the courtyard before anyone even comes remotely close to getting him.

“Where next?” Will pants, skidding to a halt. He’ll never make it out of the entire castle, there’s watchtowers there full of soldiers, but there’s got to be something, somewhere. . .

The hawk swoops and dives towards a storm drain, which is just large enough for a slightly skinny man.

Will doesn’t hesitate to make a beeline there.

“Thank you,” he breathes, staring at this strange hawk who’s given him the best gift of his life, and the bird actually fricking bows, mantling its wings and dipping its head, before screeching so loud he flinches and falls straight into the drain, swept along before he can even stop to gasp.

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The guards reach there moments to late, but when one grabs the hawk, it molts right before them, tawny feathers sliding off to reveal smooth black feathers, so smooth that the knight can’t hold on as it swells in size until the bird is an enormous raven, bigger than a man’s head and fierce and noble as it propels itself into the air, cackling.

Behind it, Chilton’s furious screams send dozens of teams of guards chasing out the gate, all frantically heading towards the beach.

It doesn’t really matter. The raven will find Will first.

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When Will wakes up, he does so because he inhales the incoming waves and sits bolt upright, coughing and gagging and spluttering, to find himself on a beach. He even finds the raven preening itself on the nearest rock, although the second he clambers towards it, it lifts his head and calls softly in welcome.

However, whenever he gets close, the raven takes off, until finally Will goes with and just trudges after it, happy to be outside with the fresh air and the waves at his back and the *trees* which – were they ever so green?

He can’t remember.

Will’s so busy marveling at the trees, actually, that it takes him a while to realize that he’s in the woods now, with trees everywhere.

“Where are you taking me?” he wonders.

The raven chuckles. “Seeeeeeeee.”

Will halts so abruptly he sends up a cloud of dust. “What did you say? Did you just – Did you just talk?” he demands. Will hasn’t been around animals in the past twenty years either, but he’s fairly certain they don’t talk.

“See,” the raven repeats. “Soooooooooooo.”

“Just, okay, stop, that’s really weird now,” Will says.

But the raven doesn’t stop, and suddenly the woods aren’t so welcoming after all. Now that Will wants to back away and leave, he finds himself bumping into branches and knocking into trunks, and the damn raven just keeps repeating itself until it’s echoing unforgivably loud in Will’s brain, and Will tries to put his hands over his ears, but that doesn’t help when the words are bouncing around in his mind. He trips and goes down.

“Soooooooo, seeeee, seeeee,” the raven says. “Soooooooooooooooooooo – ”

“Stop!” Will begs, screams, shouts, he’s not sure anymore. “Just stop, please stop, please!”

*Enough.*

Silence falls.

Panting, Will looks up, and standing before him is a great stag, with the same unblinking red eyes as the raven and so dark that Will thinks any sunlight might be swallowed up by its black fur. The raven makes a soft sound and flies towards the stag, and –

Will blinks.

The raven mantles its wings, stretching, as the stag rears up, and suddenly the boundaries between them aren’t so clear. They’re started to blur, until they’re one big blob of darkness and feathers and fur, so that when Will blinks again, an even bigger stag is standing before him as it slowly returns its hooves to the ground, with great black feathers adorning its front and fur along its back, its crown of antlers even bigger than before.

“What – ” Will starts to say.

Except then he’s violently knocked in the back of the head as the king’s soldiers swarm, and Will finds himself pressed into the ground as chains are wrapped firmly around his arms and legs. He has no breathe to speak, but no one seems to see the enormous fricking stag just standing there, and whenever Will musters the breath to speak, the soldiers press him more firmly into the ground like they think he’s going to run.

“Hurry it up,” Chilton shouts, aggravation in his voice. “We’ve spent enough time on this nonsense.”

Just before they put a bag over his head, Will thinks he sees the stag stand up, just like a human would, but then blackness obscures his vision, and he knows nothing else.

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When Will wakes up again, he knows he's back in the castle again. Mostly, he knows this by the way his head spins and how weak he feels, which means Chilton's taken the precaution of either draining enough of his blood to weaken him or cramming some new and nasty mix of poisons down his throat. Either way, in this state, there's no way he's getting back outside.

Still. Worth it.

"I don't really understand why you would take such a risk to yourself," Chilton frets. "I give you everything you could possibly need or want, Will, why oh *why* would you risk getting hurt?"

Will snorts. "A cage is still a cage."

"You're still harboring that dreadful delusion, I see. Well. This will be the last time I allow for something like that. I've engaged a new doctor to cure you of this . . . this . . . delusion of yours."

"Good luck," Will laughs.

Will's driven off every single doctor Chilton's ever sent for, mostly through his abilities or just being plain annoying. He's been subjected to every kind of treatment one could possibly think of, including that one doctor who insisted all he needed was to get laid and confiscated all of Will's clothes and hired a couple dozen "companions" to try and "cure" Will of his sharp tongue.

Yeah, Will really enjoyed driving that one off.

Chilton pets his hair. "Oh, my dear boy, what I won't do to make you happy," he says wistfully. "But you will be, I promise. I think this new doctor will finally be the one. I just have that feeling, you know."

Will just rolls over in bed and ignores him.

The doctor arrives shortly afterwards, although strangely he makes no attempt to speak to Will until all of the guards have left and locked the door behind them. Will is perfectly fine with that. Better silence than more chattering and strange people touching him.

"Hello, Will."

Startled, Will rolls back over before he can help himself. He's studied extensively – nothing else to do but read books, really – and spoken with many travelers at crime scenes and in his viewing room, so it's rare he can't place an accent, but this man . . . this man sounds different. New.

"Go away," Will replies automatically.

That earns him a laugh. "They did say you'd be reluctant to speak to me."

The speaker is a tall, elegantly dressed man, sitting with his legs crossed at the table. Strangely, he seems to have brought nothing with him – no herbs to mix into potions, no

instruments to measure with, no weird therapies for Will to try. Just a simple sketchbook and his coat, which is draped artfully over the chair.

“Let’s just say I don’t find you – or anyone, for that matter – interesting.”

The man smiles, and just for a second, Will thinks he sees great black raven wings stretching out from the man’s back as antlers grow towards the sky. Just for a second though.

“You will.”

“Wow, haven’t even got past introductions and you’re already a vat of smugness,” Will says, with a half-hearted round of applause. “That bodes oh so well for our burgeoning doctor-patient relationship.”

“I prefer to think of it as a burgeoning friendship,” the man corrects gently, without any inflection in his tone. “And my name is Hannibal Lecter.”

Will snorts and closes his eyes. Let the man talk and be smug. Not like there’s anything a doctor with a name like Hannibal Lecter could possibly do that could change anything in Will’s incredibly terrible life.

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Will, of course, ignores him and just pretends to go to sleep. Hannibal isn’t bothered. He’s spent a long time watching Will, and it’s to be expected that he’s wary of believing anyone can possibly help him. And to be fair, he doesn’t know the first thing about what Hannibal is capable of.

Pity.

No one knows this castle better than Hannibal does, and he intends to make use of that information to great effect.

*You should have killed us all, the same way you eradicated the Graham bloodline, Hannibal thinks, watching the man who should have been his fiancé slumber on. Even now, he can feel the power of the woods, reaching deep, deep, deep from the roots that live at depths of the castle dungeons all the way to the deceptively delicate looking ivy that wraps around the highest of all the towers. But no matter. I lived, and I remember, and I will never stop. Will Graham was born to be mine, and this castle was built to be mine, and this land was meant to be mine, and in a very short time, you will remember exactly why the Lecter dynasty was feared above all else.*

FINIS

Tomorrow is Day 9: Demon! Assuming Hannibal and Will cooperate, it will be another alternate meeting where Will is a lot more "stab first, ask questions later" towards Hannibal. See you then!

So the story of this ficlet is that a friend and I were discussing crappy movies and they dared me to write a better version of one of movies we deemed crappy and they picked Snow White & The Huntsman. Mostly because I threatened them with pain if they dared to pick 50 Shades of Grey. So. Hence this scene. If you don't get what I'm talking about, GOOD LET'S NEVER MENTION IT AGAIN.

# Demon

## Chapter Summary

Hannibal must admit that he and Will's relationship doesn't get off to the strongest start, mostly because Hannibal is an outsider and Will tries to cut out his heart upon meeting him.

## Chapter Notes

Warnings: description of a Ripper murder, plus attempted spousal murder cuz Will is very stabby in this fic, and a brief mention of Mpreg if that's not your thing.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

It's not exactly the most auspicious start to their relationship, Hannibal admits. Mainly because the first thing Will ever says to him is, "Not him."

Hannibal raises an eyebrow, but says nothing. It is not his place.

Ra's al Ghul does not seem distressed at the anger of his only child. He merely motions at the table. "Sit." When Will does not move, he lowers his fork and knife and repeats, "Sit, my child, or you will be seated."

Will sits.

"My child, this is Hannibal, last of the Lecter clan," Ra's says. "You will marry him tomorrow night and join our two houses into one."

Something in Will's face hardens, so that when Hannibal looks at him, he sees a lovely stone stature where once there might have been a lovely man. "He is an outsider," Will spits, fury radiating down his spine. "How *dare* he claim himself worthy of entrance to our house."

Ra's calmly cuts his meat into two and eats a portion. "Hannibal did not claim anything. I declared him worthy."

Will snorts and swings himself out of his seat in one fluid move. It is the move of a well-trained assassin, and Hannibal can feel himself tense against his will. The first thing he was ever taught when he entered the League was to mind his surroundings, and to his senses, Will radiates danger like nothing he's ever felt. It's fury and pure hatred that draws such sharp lines on this beauty's face, and it's utterly intoxicating.

“I will not be party to this. He will be the end of our house. You are mistaken in this, and I beg of you, Father, reconsider.”

This time, Ra’s does not take Will’s words half as calmly. He rises, and a second later finds him with one hand gripping Will’s shoulder so tightly the man’s knees buckle.

“You do not get a choice in the matter,” Ra’s hisses, and for a moment, he is truly the Demon’s Head, the leader of the League of Assassins, the mighty immortal to whom all must bow before. “Just as your mother Margot had no choice. Hannibal is the Heir to the Demon now, and you will join him in marriage, and you will do so willingly, to honor and serve and protect him for all the rest of your days.”

Will glowers at Hannibal. “Not if I kill him first.”

“Oh, my child,” Ra’s says, as mild as though he hadn’t tried his hardest to kill Hannibal with every single weapon and trick and injury available to his ancient mind, “you are more than welcome to try.”

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As soon as the dinner is finished, Will immediately leaves, without even waiting to ask for permission. Ra’s sighs, but allows it, and gestures for Hannibal to follow him as they walk along the twisting corridors to Hannibal’s quarters.

“I apologize,” Ra’s says quietly. “I encouraged in Will a sense of pride and strength, so that he might be ready for all the burdens of Ra’s al Ghul. Now I see that he is not the right person for this burden and this honor, but, alas, it is too late for me to go back and change the past. He is headstrong and he is willful, but if you win his loyalty, he will be a consort with no equal, and your children will be the pride of your house.”

“Our house,” Hannibal corrects.

Ra’s waves it aside with a scoff. “No, boy, not anymore. I purchased from Lord Verger a wife in exchange for a dowry to keep his house alive, and yet the Vergers are no more. Will is a Verger in name only, and hardly that.”

“But you – ”

“House Dolarhyde is finished. I finished it, when I became Ra’s al Ghul, as you shall finish the Lecter clan when you become Ra’s one day.”

Hannibal stops. He almost wants to say, *There is no one and nothing left to finish*, but what would be the point? Ra’s al Ghul may not be omniscient, but he is not ignorant of anyone or anything that passes into the walls of his League. Hannibal joined the League long enough ago for Ra’s to have dug up practically everything there is to know about him and the Lecter clan.

“How did you finish it?” Hannibal asks instead.

The eyes of Ra's gleam, reflecting light as if to remember the torches they have passed, and for a moment, he is young again, a brilliant and powerful young man, roaring his victory over the cliff tops as fire rages around him. "With fire," the man who was once Francis of House Dolarhyde says, "for my Becoming was of fire."

With that, Ra's leaves him, and Hannibal prepares for his wedding.

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Hannibal enters beneath the silence of a thousand thoughts, as member after member after the League of Assassins stand together as two great walls to form a long, silent gauntlet he must walk. Almost every man and woman and alpha and omega here were born to houses sworn to the League, and to them, he is an outsider, who came to them long after he was an adult and who sought to learn their ways not out of interest or devotion, but out a desire for revenge.

It is not that revenge is looked down upon, but even in the League, outsiders are ostracized.

But for Hannibal, it does not matter. He has been an outsider all his life. He has learned what he came to learn, and now, he will join the League not as a fellow servant, but as one step away from the crowning head.

"Tonight," Ra's intones, prompting the murmuring chants of blessings to begin, "you stand before me as Hannibal, last son of the Lecter clan. Soon, you will be Hannibal, Son of the Demon, and take your rightful place at my side."

Hannibal bows, as is expected, and offers the soft thank you in his native tongue.

Will enters in a cloud of perfume and the ringing of swords, as members of the League draw their weapons to raise an archway of steel above his head. These same members who looked upon Hannibal with silent faces and stony hearts show no such restraint when they look upon the face of the man they cherished and followed as the heir, and many in the background offer him their knee and their fist, allegiance demonstrated in action rather than word, and all the more binding for it.

This is why Ra's insisted on a marriage. Otherwise, Hannibal would forever be fighting against the hard-instilled instinct of these members to serve the born heir rather than the declared heir.

When Will comes to his side, Hannibal's breath catches. Before, Hannibal had beheld the beauty of Will in combat, fighting earnestly with joy upon his face as he fought with those he considered brothers and sisters. Now, with defiance written all over his face and clenched hands of barely restrained fury, hardly concealed by the sweeping veils of his wedding garments, he appears even lovelier. Hannibal wanted a consort equal to his fire, and Will is a raging stream, gathering strength and deceptively deep beneath the running waters, ready to drag him down to the depths and strangle him in the currents.

Before them, a member of the League continues the ritual words. "There is no vow more sacred, nor covenant more holy than the one between alpha and omega. With this ceremony, your souls are bound together, forever joined. You will never be free. You will always be held captive by your love for each other – "

Hannibal senses the movement before it happens, mostly due to the mounting fury in Will's figure.

It's the only reason he's able to turn and catch the dagger Will has aimed at his heart. Will looks at him as though he'd dance with joy to see Hannibal incinerated before him, and it is only with all his strength that Hannibal stops the blade an inch from his heart, because Will has committed all of his strength to push the blade forward.

They meet, equal for equal, hand to hand, and the blade freezes between them.

Hannibal finds the strength, somehow, to push, and Will lets the blade clatter down to rest at their feet, twinkling in the torchlight. Will turns abruptly away, and says nothing, and Hannibal knows that he has, at least, passed one test, even though he doesn't imagine for a second that Will won't try again and again and again, until he is satisfied or Hannibal is dead by his hand.

"Continue," Hannibal orders, and Ra's nods in approval.

With a few more words, they place Will's hand in Hannibal's, and the ceremony is done. They are wed, and for life or death, they belong to each other.

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Hannibal doesn't bother to try and speak to his husband until they are alone. Will's face makes his mood clear enough.

"You still object to my worthiness to ascend to the Demon's Head?" he ventures, watching as Will struggles with the countless array of pins that bind his heavy garments together.

Will responds by attempting to stab him with a pin. Blunt and not lethal, but certainly enough to break bone and bruise, with his strength and skill. Hannibal sighs and fights back, because Ra's had spoken the truth when he had said that the hardest battle of proving himself worthy would be to prove himself to Will, never mind the legions of the League.

Their wrestling leads to lots of broken items and stripped clothing and bloody wounds, because neither of them believe in the point of holding back, and Will, at one point, even tries to shove Hannibal straight into the fire. Hannibal takes that in stride and merely slams Will into the dresser in retaliation, leaving him stunned enough for Hannibal to retrieve the third dagger Will had squirreled away, although it takes only seconds before Will leaps on his turned back to try and tear his throat out with his teeth.

Finally, though, Hannibal prevails, and gets Will in a chokehold that forces Will to submit or have his neck broken, and Will stills with a snarl of fury.

"I think we can agree to disagree for now, yes?" Hannibal says, and releases his husband.

Will throws himself on the bed, eyeing Hannibal with enough hatred that one would almost believe he had not spent the better part of the last twenty minutes furiously expending said hatred on attempting to tear out Hannibal's throat. "I will not share my bed with you," Will spits. "Find your own accommodations."

“Your heat will come.”

“And I will spend it alone, as I always have,” Will says defiantly.

Hannibal raises an eyebrow. For a bound omega, to spend a heat alone is far worse than an unmated one. Some have even died when separated from their alphas, when they found themselves unable to provide their body with the water and food it needed to keep going and pull through.

“It will hurt.”

Will’s teeth flash in the dim light as he bares them. “I am Will Verger, son of Ra’s al Ghul, Heir to the Demon. I can handle anything. And you – you know nothing of our ways.”

Hannibal refrains from pointing out that he has spent the last five years learning of their ways and that the ways of the League end up with Will bearing him at least one child to carry on the line. He senses it would not do anything to lighten Will’s resentment, Will’s distrust, and Will’s fear.

His old quarters will do nicely until Will calms down, hopefully sometime in the next century.

“May I ask one thing, Will?”

Will pauses his half his shirt off, although it’s less of an enticement and more of a demonstration of how little Will thinks of him as a threat. “What?”

“When will you decide me worthy of your father’s title?”

Will stands, throwing his shirt to the floor to leave him nude and fierce in the firelight, unashamed and unbroken, an ancient godling of beauty and rage as he glares. He is the product of millennia of careful alliances and an entire life spent honing his craft and skill, and he has an unquestionable claim upon the title as the true Heir to the Demon. He is in many ways the most beautiful thing Hannibal has ever seen, even more so with Hannibal’s blood still on his teeth.

“When your feats are equal to those of the Great Red Dragon,” Will says, “then I shall think about reconsidering. Now get out of my room.”

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## **Six Months Later**

Will is woken from his rather pleasant sleep by the incessant shrill notification tone of his cellphone and the resultant complaining howls and whines by his pack as many sharp *dings* fill the sound of his house.

“Ugh, what?”

Winston nudges his hand and greets him with many licks, so Will sighs and rolls over to grab his phone.

It's Jack, because who else would it be? Will scrolls through the texts, yawning, as he shoves himself into his shoes and shirt and pants and jacket. Each text is more hysterical than last, saying things like "We might have a Ripper" to "We definitely have a Ripper" to "GET YOUR A\*\* OUT HERE RIGHT NOW GRAHAM WE HAVE A RIPPER".

"Demons above, calm down, I'm coming," Will grumbles.

Jack merely replies, "MOVE IT."

In the car, Will yawns and drinks more coffee. He doesn't really hurry because the Ripper hasn't struck in three years and also drops bodies in a predictable threefold pattern. If this is the Ripper – and Will has his doubts, Jack can see anything in any crime scene – then they still have a while to catch him.

When he arrives, he finds several officers with shock blankets and blank expressions, and one officer steps up to say, "You might want to ditch the coffee."

"Why?"

"Because otherwise your stomach might ditch it for you."

Will shrugs. "I have a strong stomach."

"It's on your head then."

What Will does see does not upset his stomach. On the contrary. It takes Will's breath away.

It's a man, carefully cultivated and preserved and bound into the growing branches of a beautiful tree. His internal organs have been carefully removed and the empty cavity behind are lined with gorgeously stunning bouquets of flowers: amaranth (*I am bound to in love forever more in immortality*), yellow iris (*My love for you burns eternal as all-consuming fire*), magnolia (*You are magnificent beyond compare or description*), and gloxinia (*You are proud and your pride makes you all the more beautiful*), all lined with fennel (*You are worthy of all the praise in the world*) and hawthorn (*This is my hope*) and olive (*This is my appeal for peace*). This, Will knows, is not the work of a hasty man with quick actions for quick fixes. This is the work and dedication of many, many long nights and weeks, for hunting and preservation and presentation. It is a love story, in the most brutal way, the way the ancients Demons once courted, and Will for a moment finds that he cannot speak for its beauty.

"Will!" Jack barks, and the beauty fades.

"What?"

Jack gestures at a man who is approaching steadily. "I brought in a consultant, in case you need help. Hopefully he'll help catching this sicko easier."

"Who did you bring?" Will sighs, because if it's another psychiatrist to pick at his brain, Will's going to have to try very hard not to carve out their brain with his dagger. Again. Although there are several members of his personal guard who probably would love the practice.

“Hello, Mr. Graham.”

Will startles so hard he nearly jumps, and he whirls to find Hannibal freaking Lecter standing next to him, face blank and smooth as a white sheet.

“Dr. Lecter,” Will replies automatically.

Hannibal inclines his head, pushing his hands into his pockets and somehow looking all the more regal for it. “What do you see?”

Will bites his lip. He doesn’t really want to say it, but . . . well. Jack is watching. “A love song,” Will murmurs, truthfully, for it cannot be anything else.

*All my love, for all of yours.*

Hannibal’s eyes crinkle. “Do you think the target will be receptive to the Ripper’s song?”

“The Ripper hasn’t killed in over three years. Who knows if the recipient is even listening?” Will counters. *Why should I care what you do in your spare time?*

“Perhaps. It’s a pity. Every song deserves to be heard.” *Then perhaps I shall keep singing, if you do not care.*

Will looks at the entire display of pretentious showmanship that his husband has crafted, and sighs. It’s partially his fault, anyways. He had dared Hannibal for a feat worthy of his father, the Great Red Dragon, and Hannibal responded by resurrecting the most infamous serial killer in all of America with a terrible, beautiful love song he probably spent months crafting and composing and perfectly.

When Will lifts his gaze, Hannibal is still standing there, patient and unmoving, like a tree that has grown through the banks of a raging river and has managed, somehow, somehow, to twist and adapt and change, until it stands unbroken in the currents of the river stretching towards the sky, and something in him, for the first time, twists. Just a little.

“You’re paying for dinner,” Will says abruptly.

The alpha smiles, pleased and slow. “Dear William,” Hannibal purrs, “why pay when I can cook?”

“I have very high standards,” Will threatens, because alphas posturing and showing off is funny until it isn’t. And Will definitely gets grumpy when he’s hungry, and when he gets grumpy, he tends to get rather stabby, according to his friends.

“I am confident I can provide you with the very best.”

“You haven’t gotten any less annoying,” Will sighs, but he takes Hannibal’s hand all the same. He can’t exactly divorce the man, short of death, and his four attempts have led to nothing but ever more elaborate flower bouquets delivered to his door every time, even after Will changed his address. He truly didn’t expect Hannibal to go to these lengths to court an

omega he married out of duty and order, but Hannibal seems determined to win him anyways, and, well. It'd be rude to not at least let Hannibal try his very hardest.

Hannibal kisses him, gently, on the forehead, a hello and welcome home all at once as he takes in Will's scent. Will grudgingly follows suit, and something in him relaxes just a little at the familiar scent of the caverns he grew up in that clings to Hannibal's clothing.

Will does miss Nanda Parbat, a lot. He left soon after his father's death, partly to watch in glee as everyone piled their burdens upon Hannibal and partly to avoid making any moves that might be seen as contradicting Hannibal's authority. As Ra's al Ghul and his husband, Hannibal had the power to punish him severely for any such actions, and so Will skipped out to return to his quiet life in Wolf Trap with his dogs, waiting and watching. And waiting it seems, not in vain, for here comes his alpha to offer a second chance.

"Does this mean you have reconsidered?" Hannibal asks.

"Perhaps."

Hannibal's pleasure at that is like the sudden parting of storm clouds in the distance, unmistakable and unable to be misinterpreted, and Will lets his alpha lead him off to be wooed a second time, albeit properly this time.

---

Will does manage to kill Hannibal eventually, although Hannibal reminds him every single time that it was only because Hannibal didn't defend himself and the Lazarus Pit rendered the killing moot.

Will, covered in sweat and blood and exhausted from hours of labor that lead him to snap Hannibal's neck in his fury, merely growls at him, but relents when Hannibal, beaming, offers their crying, beautiful daughter to him and stares at them with such adoration that it almost makes Will blush, never mind that many members of the League have seen Hannibal and Will doing much more indecent things all over the caverns.

"She is beautiful," Hannibal breathes.

"Yes, she is," Will agrees, because for once he can offer no contradiction to Hannibal's statement.

"Will you name her, husband?" Hannibal requests, and Will stares because generally the naming of a child is the alpha's right, a hallowed tradition embarking back ages and ages. Will was named not by his mother, but by his father, in the exact same way.

But Hannibal is an outsider, Will reminds himself, and sometimes, even for the consort of the Demon's Head, you pick your battles.

"Abigail," Will murmurs, because it's only fitting. No matter their quarrels, Abigail will be their pride and joy, and Will knows it as sure as anything that Hannibal will defend Abigail to his very last breath, just as he has defended his title as Demon's Head and his claim upon Will for many decades past. "For the joy she will bring."

“It’s perfect,” Hannibal says simply, and Will kisses him because there’s nothing else to say.

FINIS

## Chapter End Notes

Tomorrow is Day 10: Skanky Halloween Costumes! I have no fscking idea what to write for that. So IDK what's gonna happen. See you then!

The story behind this ficlet is that I was inspired whilst watching Arrow season 3 episode 22, "This Is Your Sword". Mostly by [this part](#) at around 40 seconds and my desire to see Will try and off Hannibal. And the rest, as they say, is history.

# Skanky Halloween Costumes

## Chapter Summary

Abigail just wants a normal, non-skanky Halloween costume. Will and Hannibal team up to give her the very best.

## Chapter Notes

Warnings: none

I had no idea what to do with this, so . . . murder family fluff! Hope that's acceptable :D

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

They've been living together long enough that when Abigail comes home in a huff to throw her bookbag down at the seat and take out her evident frustration by viciously tearing into one of the freshly made breakfast croissants, Hannibal is only mock serious in tone when he asks, "Who do I have to teach a lesson?" and Will is half-hearted in his attempt when he immediately chucks a pen at Hannibal's face without looking up from the papers he's trying to grade.

Hannibal catches the pen anyways, the bastard, and neatly slides it into his pocket before continuing to carefully knead the fresh dough.

Abigail tears another chunk of croissant and chews it furiously, although it's clear that the familiar atmosphere of one father cooking and the other correcting grad papers is calming to her, and slowly her bites become less and less vicious until she swallows and finally answers. "Everyone is talking about Halloween costumes," she says.

Hannibal hums noncommittally. Generally he knows that Abigail and Will hate it when he slips into therapist mode, but even they acknowledge that it's difficult for him to turn off. "Considering that many of your peers are still in the age where engaging in childish dress-up can be carried off as a statement of maturity, this is not surprising."

Will chucks another pen at him. "Hannibal."

Abigail giggles at that, because Hannibal takes the pen with a bow and starts to juggle them, a rare smile creasing his face as Will finally looks up at the sound of Abigail's laughter and proceeds to continue tossing more pens at Hannibal until he finally catches them all with a giant flourish.

“But seriously, what’s wrong with what everyone’s talking about?” Will asks.

Abigail turns to him, because even though she usually feels closer to Hannibal, Will is the one who truly expresses and understands emotion in the way Hannibal generally logics his way out of. “Every single costume is just so . . . skanky,” she says. “Like sexy cook or sexy ninja or sexy maid.”

Hannibal and Will share a glance, and Abigail rolls her eyes.

The only downside of Hannibal and Will is that they’re both so apart from normal humans that the difference probably didn’t even register to them, except perhaps to annoy Will and cause Hannibal to add names to his rolodex.

“I just want a *normal* costume,” Abigail says, surprising even herself. Because Abigail isn’t normal. Hannibal and Will aren’t normal. And generally she loves that, loves that Will teaches her to fish and Hannibal teaches her to hunt, and that their normal dinner prep can take up to four hours long, and that their idea of flirting is to say inappropriate things over gruesome dead bodies. But sometimes, even she just wants to fit in.

“Normality is not something one should strive for,” Hannibal says cautiously.

Will sighs and rubs at his face, sliding his glasses off. “Yeah, but when everyone’s judging you, you still sometimes kinda want it,” he points out. “Okay, Abigail, what have you got in mind?”

---

When Will comes to bed, Hannibal is still studying his tablet with a moody expression that grows dimmer by the minute. Will sighs and takes the tablet away, causing Hannibal to reflexively chide him by saying, “Rude, Will.”

“Come to bed, Hannibal, and stop dwelling.”

“I . . . did not predict that Abigail would want something like this.”

Will curls underneath their blankets and wriggles until he finds a comfortable position, earning him a soft smile from Hannibal. “So is the moodiness because you failed to predict it or you’re annoyed your protégé wants to be normal?”

“I am not moody.”

“Try again.”

Hannibal lets himself sit a little harder on their bed than usual, causing Will to yelp as the bounce of the mattress dislodges him, and they engage in a little tit for tat wrestling that finally ends when Will levers the full weight of his body onto Hannibal and smirks at him, tangling their legs together to ensure that Hannibal can’t flip them back over too easily.

“Very well,” Hannibal concedes. “I find myself distressed at the thought that I could not predict what Abigail would desire.”

“Hannibal,” Will says with a sigh, curling up against his chest, “this isn’t like you forgot to pick her up or put lunch in her backpack. This isn’t going to damage Abigail forever if you didn’t realize she wanted a different Halloween costume. Want versus need, Hannibal.”

“And what Abigail needs is a stable household that can provide for her.”

“Hannibal, you cook, you clean, you give her an allowance, you bought her clothes and a car, *and* you practically pushed your way through the foster parent process until they gave up and let you keep her. I’m pretty sure you’ve got all of her needs thoroughly covered. Like more than needs to be covered.”

Hannibal curls his fingers into Will’s hair, and Will lets himself close his eyes and relax under the gentle massage. It’s an expression of trust, between them, to allow such dangerous hands so close to their vulnerable faces, although now Will finds it just as comforting as he finds it arousing and generally he can fall asleep all the easier with Hannibal’s arms around him. Hannibal tends to find it more arousing.

“Let us keep her,” Hannibal murmurs. “We are her fathers.”

“Fine, so you went one step further. Again. Not helping your ‘I failed her’ argument.”

Hannibal glares moodily at him, so Will laughs at him, because he can’t imagine Hannibal being brought down by the sole fact of Abigail wanting a different Halloween costume.

“Hannibal,” Will says, nuzzling close to Hannibal’s neck to feel the immediate surrender as Hannibal bares his throat for him, “you are as close to the perfect provider that Abigail could ever get. This one thing won’t change that. She won’t abandon us and vanish into the distance just because you didn’t predict this. She is our family now. We won’t lose her or anyone else.”

Some part of Hannibal finally relaxes at that, and Will grins when Hannibal sets his teeth to Will’s shoulder. It’s possessive and protective both, and he loves it more than he can express.

“I won’t lose either of you,” Hannibal confirms, and then finally settles down to sleep.

---

Hannibal spends the remaining days leading up to Halloween sketching and sewing furiously, comparing fabrics and wandering around with his nose buried in a tablet and a tape measure constantly in hand, using the excuse of honing Abigail’s senses to random pop out and measure parts of her arms and legs and torso whenever she least expects it.

Will, meanwhile, retreats to the workshop Hannibal thoughtfully had constructed for him outside the house, and gets to work on his own project.

Abigail is overjoyed when they present her with a beautiful replica of a Star Wars Rey costume with Hannibal’s meticulous attention to detail providing her with an almost exact copy of her clothing whilst Will’s careful construction provides her with a mostly functional lightsaber. Except for the whole ‘chops people into bits’ bit.

“Uh, don’t whack your hand too hard,” Will warns her when she whacks it against her hand, eyes gleeful, to hear the resulting crackle of sound effects, “it will actually shock you if you keep it up.”

Abigail glares at him, because they’ve had the discussion multiple times over whether Abigail needs mace at school.

“What? Originally it was going to be like a taser. Oh, also, twist the handle.”

Abigail does it, and cries out in joy when the hilt detaches to reveal a sharp and shiny knife. She dances around the table to hug both her fathers, causing Will to stammer and Hannibal to take it with dutiful aplomb, and dashes off to change.

“You think we did okay?” Will asks.

Hannibal gathers his husband close, listening fondly to the sounds of his daughter romping about in her room, testing the lightsaber with its hidden knife it and working as fast as she can to don her new costume.

“Yes, my love, I think we did.”

FINIS

## Chapter End Notes

Join me tomorrow for Day 11: Witches! Where I try and pull off a Swan Lake AU. AKA Will's gonna be a mongoose, people, it's gonna be great :)

# Witches

## Chapter Summary

When a witch curses Will to the form of a mongoose, he finds solace in a friendly fellow cursed stag named Hannibal.

## Chapter Notes

Warnings: lots of implied sex, sorry not sorry

I meant more like Swan Princess, not Swan Lake, but it's removed enough that it doesn't really matter, I guess. I just wanted to write a mongoose!Will, okay?

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Once upon a time, there was a castle scribe who was famous for producing ream after ream of details whenever she sat for court, and she was noted to be particularly talented in her wordplay and her descriptions of what decisions occurred. However, she also was noted to frequently be chided by the king and queen for recording things that ought not to be recorded – that time the king dozed off in the middle of a lengthy request; the time the queen's robe caught fire due to a wind and too-close candle, resulting in a rather alarmed king and screaming queen; and the time that the young prince spat up all over his wet nurse during his presentation to the court, causing his mother to almost drop him. However, it was generally tolerated because she was favored by the queen.

Unfortunately for the scribe, the queen passed soon after the prince turned one, and when the scribe wrote about the king's neglect of his only son whilst he mourned his wife, the king had had enough.

The king had the scribe tossed out with naught but the clothes on her back, freshly dipped quill still in hand, and promptly forgot she had ever existed.

The scribe, though, was the daughter of a powerful witch, and she did not forget the insult half as easily.

Fredericka – or Freddie, which was the name she went by, as witches almost never told anyone their true name – vowed revenge, and she foretold that soon everyone would know the depths of the king's mistake in treating anyone, but especially a witch, with the lack of compassion and respect all rulers must show to their subjects.

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When Will wakes up, at first, he thinks he's in a very bad dream, because he awakens to find himself in a room filled with smoke and incense and his limbs bound securely to the table. Unfortunately, tugging on the ropes sparks flickers of pain that ensure him that no, it's not a dream, it is definitely reality.

All of his shouting, though, just summons a slender red-haired woman dressed in a long black cloak, who beams at the sight of him.

"Oh, lovely, you're awake," she says immediately. "I was worried that the blow to your head might have scrambled your pretty head, so I'm delighted that you're back in the land of the living. And conscious, of course."

"Who – "

Will starts to ask a question, but the lady shushes him like a pet and lays a careful finger on his throat, and Will finds himself unable to ask any other questions, his voice stolen.

"Now, that's much better. Oh, don't worry, I'll give it back," she says cheerfully. "But I do so hate it when people scream, and I already got enough when I overturned your carriage. Don't make that face, everyone survived, even that nasty bodyguard who tried to splice off my arm. All I wanted was you, anyways, and my, my, haven't you grown since I last saw you, princeling?"

Will spits in her face.

"Rude," she tuts, and when she places her hand on his mouth, suddenly he finds he can't even open them, and his heartbeat accelerates.

While Will frantically tries to regain his voice or open his lips, the woman begins to chant, almost like singing carols, gleeful and pleasant and soft, raising a dagger over her that gleams unnaturally bright in the dark. All of Will's struggles do nothing, since he's bound so securely, so he's left to lay helplessly whilst she cuts his clothes from his body to leave him shivering and naked before her.

"I must say, you're a far sight tanner than I thought you'd be," the witch muses, tapping a finger alongside his stomach. "But your father never did take my threat seriously, I guess. Oh well. Now, for the fun part!"

She brings the dagger to his face, and Will flinches, but all she does it cut a lock of hair.

"Sorry about the undressing, but you really won't need clothes in, oh, a few hours. Now I just need one drop of blood and we're done!"

Despite the witch's assurances, it still burns like nothing Will's ever felt when she finally raises the dagger, bloody and bound with his hair, above his body, and although he screams and screams, her spells ensure that nothing ever emerges from his lips, until finally his body convulses so strongly that despite her magic his head slams against the table hard enough that he passes out.

“Oh bugger,” Freddie muses, staring at the naked man in front of her. “You’re far too heavy for me to move alone now. Well, guess we’ll have to wait to do introductions at sunset. I suppose you won’t mind that I’ll leave you here until you’re easier to transport?”

Will, of course, makes no response.

“Excellent!”

---

The next time Will wakes up, he’s sailing through the air, and nothing quite registers until he smacks into water with a painful sting. Frantically, he tries to get his bearings, only to realize that for some reason when he flails it’s a lot less effective than it generally is.

“Open your eyes, darling!” the witch trills from shore.

So Will does.

He’s in some sort of lake, the sun is setting, and the reflection staring back at him through the distorted waves as he struggles to stay afloat is distinctively *not* human.

Will screams, except it comes out high-pitched and animal-like, and he’s so startled that he loses his balance and actually starts to drown, unable to regain equilibrium. Water begins to gather at his throat as he coughs and splutters, and his little paws don’t seem nearly adequate enough to keep him at the surface, so Will struggles and struggles and finally comes to the realization that he’s going to die as a *bloody mongoose*.

His vision is just starting to grow black when the witch lets out a scream of her own, and splashing sounds reach Will’s ears as there is the sound of might hooves striking the beach.

The next thing Will knows, powerful jaws are locking onto his scruff and lifting him up and up and up, and he would flail except that the creature holding him knows exactly where to bite, and Will dangles helplessly from their jaws and prays that he doesn’t get dropped again.

“He would’ve been fine, you’re such a worrywart,” the witch calls out.

The creature holding Will lets loose a mighty snort of condemnation, although it thankfully does not toss its head back and send Will flying through the air again.

“Fine! Fine, blame me,” the witch snarls, “like you always do. Ugh. Anyways, where were we? Ah yes. Hello, Prince William! Welcome to your new life, I hope you enjoy it. And yes, you are indeed trapped as in a mongoose form right now, but don’t worry! As soon as the moon rises over the lake . . .”

And sure enough, Will risks looking down enough to see the pale flickers of moon dancing on the waves left in the wake of the creature’s charge, and the water begins to glow rather brightly, like the dagger the witch had used, until suddenly the waters go completely still before exploding in a gigantic spout, swirling around Will and his rescuer, who immediately drops him – but it doesn’t matter, because Will lands not on paws, but on feet. He doesn’t

stay on his feet, because he immediately falls on his butt, but the important thing is that he looks at his hands and is relieved to see human features again.

Unfortunately, by the time he's done sighing about that and remembers the witch, she's long gone, leaving a very damp Will with his savior.

His savior turns out to be a very tall man, with hair streaked with grey and a broad chest and sharp cheekbones, topped off with unsettling maroon eyes. Unlike Will, he seems to have no qualms about his nakedness, and helps Will to his feet without taking his eyes off of Will's rather red face.

"I see the witch Freddie has found a new victim," his rescuer says, words accented in a way Will's never heard before.

"Um . . . hi? And thanks."

The man laughs and starts wading towards shore, where Will can see a pile of clothes carefully stashed in a hollowed out tree. "Well, it would not do to have my only companion drown," the man says cheerfully, passing Will an oversized pair of pants and shirt before tugging on his own set.

"Do you always care around extra clothes?" Will asks curiously, because how many other people are trapped here?

"Hmm? Oh, no, I imagine Freddie put these here for you. She prides herself on treating her guests with courtesy."

"I'm not her guest!"

His rescuer gives him a faintly amused look. "If you can find her and pin her down long enough to tell her that without losing your voice immediately, I would welcome the entertainment."

Will sighs and slumps. He was never trained in magic, always followed around by bodyguards and personal magicians. His rescuer is right; Will would never get the upper hand against a witch, especially not one that involves him weaponless and stripped of any defensive wards to stop her spells.

"Follow me," his rescuer says, "I imagine that breakfast is ready."

"Breakfast?"

---

His rescuer leads Will to a small wooden cottage that overlooks a hill near the lake. Judging by his rescuer's mild pause upon entering, Will guesses that the two room cottage originally did not have two beds in it, although the table set with two platters of food and a roaring fire are more than welcome. The fire dries him quickly, and he sets about to fill his belly as his rescuer eats at a more leisurely pace.

Will is just indulging in dessert when he realizes, "I didn't even ask your name."

His rescuer smiles, having long since finished and settled back in his chair. “No offense is taken; you were rather distracted. My name is Hannibal Lecter.”

“Will Graham,” Will returns, shaking the man’s hand when he offers.

Hannibal raises an eyebrow. “Prince Will of Virginia?”

“Uh . . . yeah, how’d you know that?”

Hannibal clears their plates away, stacking them neatly on a small countertop engraved with countless flowing patterns and runes. “I hear many things from the forest, because few hold their tongue in the face of an animal,” Hannibal explains. “The disappearance of the young Prince Will has caused much talk amongst the hunters that venture close to the forest’s edges.”

“I’m not that young.”

Hannibal raises an eyebrow at his own graying hair. “Compared to me, princeling, you are young.”

“And how old are you?”

“I thought princes were trained to be polite,” Hannibal says, a smile playing on his lips.

“And I thought knights were trained to show chivalry.”

That earns him a belly-deep laugh as Hannibal tosses his head back, a strangely animal-like motion in a human man. “Oh, princeling,” Hannibal chuckles, “I am no knight. And even if I was, I have lived this half-life so long I imagine that I would not remember even I had been a knight.”

Will feels the defiance drain away at the reminder of the witch’s spell. He imagines that it functions like most spells based off the moon: human by night, animal by day, a half-life strengthened by the half moon under which the spell had been cast. The half-moon is generally favored by witches, as it brings into balance light and dark, leaving their spells all the more powerful for it.

“Why haven’t you ever just . . . left?” Will asks. “Found someone to reverse the curse.”

Hannibal hums. “That is not quite how enchantments work. For one thing, the curse-breaker must be stronger than the curse-caster, and to place a half-life curse requires great power indeed. For another . . . no matter how far you stray, princeling, when the sun sets you will always turn back into a mongoose, no matter where you are or who you are with.”

“So?”

“So if you wish to be human again when the moon rises, you must be here. On the lake.”

Will groans and lets his head flop forward to bang against the table. His knights would sooner hunt down a mongoose and chase it out of the castle than stick around to listen to its story,

and in fact, Will can't even speak as a mongoose, and no one's going to let in a naked dripping man by nightfall.

He startles at the touch of Hannibal's palm to his neck.

"Take heart, princeling," Hannibal murmurs. "You are not alone here, at least."

---

Will is tired enough that soon after the meal, he clambers into bed. Hannibal follows, although he does not sleep. He claims that his hobbies are best done with human appendages, and so he sleeps in his animal form for most of the day, protected from hunters by the knowledge that this forest belongs to a witch.

Will tries to listen, but in truth he nods off midsentence and only wakes back up minutes before sunrise.

Hannibal leads him solemnly out of the cabin, and as the moon fades and the sun rises, his rescuer lets out a long breath and begins to strip off his clothes, stashing them carefully in the hollowed tree. Will follows suit halfheartedly, and pays for it when his transformation starts earlier than he thought and he ends up swallowed by his pants, chirping and turning in circles in frustration until Hannibal wanders over and noses the clothes off of his head.

In proper daylight, Will looks up – and up and up and *up* – to see that Hannibal's animal form is a mighty black stag, with fur that gleams against the sunlight and feathers interwoven among his neck. He has an enormous crown of antlers, although they don't seem to hinder him when he leans down to nuzzle gently against Will's back.

Will nuzzles back, breathing in the musky animal scent, and finds it no hardship to keep pace when Hannibal moves off.

They settle together in a small clearing not far from the cottage and the lake, as Hannibal puts his great head down and closes his eyes to doze. Will, though, finds himself more awake than ever, and all too soon his curiosity overwhelms the sense of safety Hannibal's bulk provides, so he wanders off to explore.

He immediately regrets this decision when he runs into a great red squirrel who declares in shrilling tones that this tree is *his* tree, and even bites Will on the tail for good measure, sending Will fleeing back to Hannibal's side, to which the stag merely laughs.

Will bites Hannibal for that, but the stag merely shakes him off and settles down again, so Will follows suit, lulled to sleep by the sound of Hannibal's steady heartbeat.

---

Days and nights pass in the exact same way, with Will and Hannibal sleep through most of the day and then spending nights eating and discussing whatever comes to mind. Will finds that despite Hannibal's claims of having spent years and years in the half-life curse, he is surprisingly knowledgeable about both current events and generally philosophy, and somehow Hannibal turns out to be a better teacher of most of the princely etiquette and

political maneuvering than all of Will's teachers combined, of which Will takes full advantage.

They grow closer and closer too, until Will thinks nothing of having their discussions not across a table but slumped together on the sofa, their arguments dictated not in raised voices but gentle words. They share plates and food, swap clothes and ideas, and every time they return to human form, Hannibal is careful to either let Will perch on his back or carry him in his powerful jaws as they await the moon's rise in the middle of the lake.

It is a peaceful life, and for the most part, Will finds no argument against it.

---

Finally, though, Will faces the awful reality that six months have passed, and all of the chatter from passing hunters and travelers dwindles to nothing.

His father – with all of his soldiers and power and court magicians – is not coming.

That night, Will destroys the piece of wood where he had been faithfully inscribing the days. Hannibal had watched him, but apart from giving him tips on where the stash the piece and how best to inscribe it, had said nothing, eyes full of weary resignation that Will now understands all too well.

When Hannibal goes to bed, Will pushes their two beds together and climbs in with him.

“Princeling?”

“I just, I can't, please,” Will stammers, struggling to hold back tears.

Hannibal seems to understand, and he gathers Will up in strong arms much the same way that in stag form he wraps his long neck around Will's tiny mongoose form. Hannibal sleeps shirtless, but Will finds that he no longer cares about propriety, because he's seen Hannibal naked and Hannibal's certainly seen him naked more times than they can count. Besides, the reassurance of warm human skin against his cheek calms him in ways he can't explain, so Will just buries his face in his chest and tries not to get Hannibal all wet.

“My mongoose,” Hannibal murmurs, because nowadays Hannibal never calls him by name, only as princeling or mongoose, “you are not alone.”

Once Will had spent days egging Hannibal to leave and save himself from the years of being trapped in stag form, but now Will can't even bear the thought of being alone for another minute, let alone the age it would take for Hannibal to break the curse and return. “Please don't leave me,” Will says, feeling like a coward.

“Never,” Hannibal vows.

---

Will and Hannibal are in constant skin contact after that, as animals or as humans, and from then on the boundaries start blurring until Will's so attuned to Hannibal that they don't even really speak anymore, able to communicate with looks and touches and tilts of the head.

They make love for the first time under the light of a full moon, Hannibal gentle and fierce in alternating turns, but a teacher all the same, except in the art of lovemaking instead of the art of etiquette. Will learns as rapidly as ever, because he enjoys turning the tables to have Hannibal gasping and twisting underneath him, breath gone and eyes wild, beast-like snarls erupting behind sharp teeth, although Hannibal is equally capable of pinning him down and driving him just as crazy, with the surety of long practice and the unbreakable devotion of one caught in love's spell.

It becomes their life, turning attention inwards to their little cottage and ignoring everything around them. They eat together and chase each other by day and make love at night, only to sleep and begin the process all over again.

---

Freddie appears suddenly one day, whilst Will is sunning himself on Hannibal's back while the stag roams mindlessly and munches on some grass, and Will only realizes it because Hannibal grows tense and snorts in warning, which he has before. Hannibal protects Will as faithfully in animal form or human form, and Will's never felt him alarmed by anything in the forest due to just how large Hannibal's stag form is, so Hannibal's wariness jolts Will to awakening.

"You two smell like sex," Freddie says flatly.

Hannibal takes a step back when Freddie takes one forward, stamping a foot in warning.

"I'm not going to hurt him, relax," Freddie mutters in exasperation. "Although thanks for the constant sex, it's really generated a lot of energy in the forest. I've never seen the trees so healthy. No, I came here to, uh, lift the spell."

Will blinks. Hannibal blows a breath, tilting his neck in question, and Will chitters to add his opinion.

"Well, I cast it because I wanted something interesting to write about," Freddie explains, bouncing from foot to foot. "Add a little drama to history, you know? 'Missing Prince Sparks Desperate Search'. Only . . . well, nothing's happened, and it's been, like, a year and a half now. Frankly, you're more interesting to this fricking stag than to your own kingdom, which, not judging, but also incredibly boring. If you don't mind getting down from your little friend there, I can turn you back."

Hannibal immediately lowers his head, but although Will can dismount in seconds, he refuses, clinging to Hannibal's antlers, unsure.

He's spent so long in this half-life that he no longer really remembers what's like to be human again, to dress in fine clothes and attend balls and make small talk. Will's life revolves around Hannibal now, and the specifics are dictated only by the rise and fall of the sun and moon.

Hannibal gets impatient, apparently, because he shakes his neck. Gently, so as not to send Will flying, but enough that he's dislodged and goes sliding down Hannibal's neck to fall with a squeak at his feet. When Will protests and attempts to clamber back up, Hannibal lifts

his feet away and raises his head, eyes full of that same weary resignation, and when Will stops trying to climb and resorts to crying plaintively at him, the same cries which once brought Hannibal full steam to his side now have Hannibal nudging him gently towards Freddie with his nose.

“Oh, would you – just – hold still!” Freddie barks in annoyance, barely holding onto his wriggling form.

There’s a flash, a burning sense of movement, like his bones expanding from the inside out, and then Will blinks and finds himself falling to his knees, human in the daylight for the first time in well over a year.

“There, see, no harm done,” Freddie says cheerfully.

Will snarls at her, unable to stop himself from his instinctive animal reaction, although it loses its force when he immediately takes a step towards her and falls to his knees, disoriented and unbalanced. Hannibal comes to his side, huffing quietly, and lets Will curl his fingers in his ruff and lean on his great form to stand, which makes Will realize, in a dim part of his mind, just how *big* Hannibal truly is in stag form. His head alone comes to Will’s chin, never mind his equally enormous crown of antlers. Will could ride Hannibal as easily as a horse, even in human form.

When Will figures out how words work again, he spits out, “Why haven’t you fixed Hannibal?”

Freddie cocks an eyebrow. “Pardon?”

“Fix. Hannibal. Like you fixed me.”

“Can’t do that.”

“You – ” Will says, but the witch vanishes between one blink and the next.

Hannibal noses comfortingly at his shoulder, so Will sighs and slides back down to his shaky knees, burying his face in Hannibal’s familiar fur.

“I’ll fix you,” Will promises, fingers tight in Hannibal’s fur. “I’ll find her and make her fix you.”

“You cannot.”

Will nearly falls over. “You can *talk*?!”

Hannibal blinks at him. “My curse was not brought about by the witch Freddie,” he says, calm as ever. “I was cursed by someone far older and far stronger, and then left to wander as a mindless animal. Freddie tried to lift it, but all she could do was to give me half of my time as a human again, lest I lose myself entirely in the stag.”

“Okay, so . . . how do I fix you then?”

Hannibal sighs, a great gusty sigh, and licks at his face. "You cannot," Hannibal repeats. "I was cursed for my outer self to reflect the animal mindlessness with which I inflicted revenge upon my family's murderers, and to remain in that form for all my days, til I was no better than the same savage beasts that they were. You are not skilled enough in magic to break my curse, my princeling, and even if you studied for all the rest of your days, you still would not be enough." Hannibal pauses, and then for the first time since Will's met him, he breaks eye contact first, swinging his head to face the direction of the main road on the edges of Freddie's forest. "But you, my mongoose, you are free now. Go home. Be a prince again. Be free and live."

"I wouldn't leave you," is all Will can manage to say, aghast.

"Yes, you can. Go. Be free."

"NO! I can't, Hannibal, I can't, please don't make me."

Hannibal rears up to slam back down against the ground, ears laid back, and for the first time, Will feels a shiver of fear at the sight of Hannibal's enormous form, practically shaking in his fury.

"Yes, you will," Hannibal orders. "You will be free, because you cannot remain in this forest as you are now, without Freddie's spell. Her trees will tear you apart and her earth will swallow you until her lakes drown your lungs. You do not belong in this forest anymore, my mongoose. You must leave."

"Please, Hannibal, please, I can't! I love you, I can't, please, Hannibal," Will begs, mindless, as Hannibal takes to physically pushing him.

"You do not love me, William," Hannibal says, sad, as if from a distance. "You love a thought and a mirage, for the human that I was no longer exists. I am not even half a human now. I am a stag of the forest, and you, my dearest, are human."

The words trigger something in Will, and he sets his feet into the dirt and grabs onto Hannibal's antlers, holding so tightly that he can't be moved, and when Hannibal snarls, Will snarls back, gripping tighter and tighter until blood runs down his arms as Hannibal's sharp tines cut deep lines into his palms. Hannibal even sets one heavy hoof onto Will's bare feet, but Will doesn't even flinch, buoyed by his rage.

"You say I'm human?" Will shouts. "I ate food from your mouth and licked water from your fur, like an animal! I chased you in the forest and bit you like an animal! I took you in the mud and in the snow and I let you take me against the trees and grass, like an animal! I *am* an animal, and I won't leave you, because if you're an animal so am I, and I DON'T CARE!"

Hannibal rears against him with a sound of pain, and this time, despite Will's attempts to hold on, Hannibal's antlers are ripped straight from his bleeding palms, and Will falls with a gasp to watch as Hannibal screams, alien-like and full of agony, bellowing and scraping at the floor as sickening cracks of bones fill the meadow. Blood runs from Hannibal's antlers to stain his fur, turning it almost red above the black, and Hannibal thrashes on the forest floor,

breaking branches and scattering bits of fur, all of his usual grace and elegance gone as bones and muscle move grotesquely under his skin.

“Hannibal,” Will says, risking a powerful leg to the face as he tries to scramble closer, frantic, “Hannibal!”

When it’s over, Hannibal lies on his side, breathing so heavily Will can almost see his breath, and when Will goes to touch him, Hannibal’s fur disintegrates at his touch, leaving behind nothing but bare human skin.

“Hannibal?”

“You broke it,” Hannibal says, sitting up and staring at his hands like he’s never seen them before, surrounded by raven feathers and bits of stag fur. “You broke the curse.”

“I did?”

Perhaps not the whole curse, though. They still wrestle and mate like animals on the floor, right then and there, biting and scratching for dominance, and causing such a stir that birds take off in flocks, squawking.

When they’re done, Hannibal rests on top of him, chest heaving, and hugs him close, so Will does the natural thing and punches him in the face.

“Rude, princeling.”

“No, it’s deserved! For you being such an idiot!” Will grabs his face, and Hannibal is a right sight indeed with his mouth bloody and a black eye and hair sticking up in every which way, and Will feels his heart swell with such love he can barely voice it. “You’re never leaving me again, got it? Never ever. No matter what.”

Hannibal kisses him, kisses all over his face, and Will feels himself softening at the barrage of apologies.

“No,” Hannibal says, like an unbreakable vow, “I will never leave you again, my mongoose.”

---

*And thus the mongoose fell in love with the stag, Freddie writes at the close of her newest legendary fairytale romance, and some say they are still in the witch’s forest today, neither animal nor human, yet all the more in love for it.*

“Did you two really have to have sex in the hot springs though? I *liked* bathing there.”

FINIS

Tomorrow is Day 12: Haunted Mansion! Featuring another TV ripoff, although it's at least from a different network this time. Also: get ready for some bada\*\* Chiyoh, peoples!

Originally there was gonna be a way more dramatic ending, buuuuuut I ran out of time. Maybe one day I'll rewrite it and you'll get the drama of Hannibal's backstory and Will's father being like "WTF who is this random Lithuanian man you dragged out of the woods and why are you naked?" but for now - they live together, they fsck constantly, and they're in love, happily ever after, done, finished, completed.

# Haunted Mansion

## Chapter Summary

Jack says exactly two things to Will when he wakes up: "I'm sorry" and "Lecter didn't make it".

## Chapter Notes

Warnings: Angst, angst, angst everywhere

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Jack Crawford says exactly two things to Will when he finally wakes up, dizzy and injured and battered, hands bound to the rails of his hospital bed and an oxygen mask clamped to his face. He says, "I'm sorry, Will" and he says, "Lecter didn't make it."

It's at once much better and much worse than Molly, who only said one thing ("How could you, Will?"), and Alana, who said nothing and walked away the minute Will made eye contact.

It's better because it answers all of Will's questions at once.

It's worse because. Well.

"Lecter didn't make it" becomes the metronome pace to Will's life, tick tock tick tock, over and over, with each heart beat, each breath, each blink, each step. In the faintest, dimmest parts of his mind, he acknowledges being cared for, being released, being tried, being convicted, and being sent off to whatever asylum the FBI arranged for, but Will barely notices. Each passing minute is just another invisible slash against the bleeding wound in Will's heart, which no amount of medicine can fix, because for some reason, even though Hannibal being present was a terrible thorn in Will's side, his absence is like the entire bloody rose brush of thorns has consumed Will whole, and no matter what he does or where he turns, there a new thorn awaits.

Yet Will is an evergreen, alone and cold in the middle of winter. Although his flower has faded and fallen, he cannot, so he lives on, bitter and green amongst the sea of blank white noise.

---

They don't send Will back to the BSCHI. Will's not entirely sure why, but the FBI seems leery to return him there after what happened the first time. Maybe they think that the place is jinxed in terms of having innocent and guilty people come out the opposite after going inside.

Instead, Will is sent to a different asylum, which occupies a supposedly haunted mansion refurbished to provide a "stable and fulfilling life" for people like him.

Will, in one of his more morbid moods, thinks that the builders chose the place so that people could brush off the screams and groans as those belonging to the actual dead, rather than those dead to society and locked in padded white vaults.

In any case, Will gets his own padded cell, with a hard padded bed and no windows, and he spends most of his time locked in there, staring blankly at the ceiling, lost in the stream. For the first week, he's only let out to eat and use the restroom, because his nurses explain that it's easier to acclimate to the asylum's lifestyle if he goes cold turkey to cut everything and everyone from his past, toxic life off.

Will doesn't bother explaining that there's no one left to cut off.

Eventually, his lack of response to anything earns him small rewards. A bigger helping of mashed fruit for dessert. Actual shoes, instead of simple thread-worn socks. A scratchy small blanket to help with the drafts. Small rewards, for not doing anything at all, which means that his nurses mostly just escort him around.

It's rather telling, Will thinks, that he is rewarded for not responding, instead of being encouraged to speak up during therapy.

But it doesn't matter. Will lives in the stream now, and every night he dreams of Hannibal, slipping from his grasp in the dark, unforgiving waters, and every night he screams his beloved's name and grasps frantically for the barest hint of his body, so that every morning he wakes to find that he has scratched himself bloody, much to the annoyance of his nurses.

Finally, it all comes to a head when Jack comes to visit, yet again, with a heavy expression and a folder filled with glossy photos.

"They, um . . . say you're doing better," Jack offers.

Will casts a line into the stream. Waits.

"I think . . . I have another . . . well. I need your help."

The fish nibble at Will's waders, and he kicks out with a sigh. All of this lovely bait he's got attached to his lures, and instead the fish come to bite his feet. It figures.

"Will?"

Will reels in his line and casts it again. Patience, he's learned, is key when it comes to fishing.

"Will, goddamn it, look at me."

Will checks the sun and then carries on. There's still plenty of time before he has to call it a day and trudge home empty-handed to his pack of eager dogs. He thinks he can land at least one good keeper for dinner.

"Will," Jack says and this time he actually reaches out and grabs Will's shoulder. "Will, look at me. I need you to remember who you are. I can get you out, okay? If that's what you want, I can get you out, I still have friends, okay? Just . . . Just, I can get you out," he repeats, like a broken record, as if he has any idea what Will wants.

Finally, Will closes his eyes and takes a deep breath. The stream fades, and its bubbling currents are replaced with the low murmurs of other visitors, though there aren't many.

"I don't want to remember, Jack," Will says slowly. "I want to forget."

"That's not the Will Graham I remember."

"Then it's a good thing the FBI swept me under the rug here for people to forget."

"I can get you out!"

Will has to smile at that, but not at Jack. He smiles at the great big stag that leans over Jack's shoulders, huffing and puffing, wanting attention. "You got me in, Jack," Will says, and they both know it's about more than the BSCHI, about this asylum, about the FBI.

"I said I was sorry."

"And so am I. But the Will you remember . . . doesn't exist anymore. Good-bye, Agent Crawford."

Will gets up and leaves then, wading back into the stream with the stag faithfully at his shoulder, as the angry squawks of birds fade into the distance.

---

"I hear you want to forget," says a nameless vulture, circling Will's latest catch.

"Do I?"

Another vulture lands, clucking softly, and then another, til five are standing in a row, eyeing the fat fish Will has landed on the shore.

"We can help you."

"I think I'm doing just fine. Isn't that what you told Agent Crawford?"

The vulture clucks again, but this time more like a dismissive turn of the back. "Agent Crawford is not your family. We may tell him anything he wants to hear."

"That's your right," Will says idly, preparing to cast another line.

"But you're not fine, are you?"

“Says?”

The vulture checks a leaf, nudging it this way and that. “You still call for him, you know,” the vulture says, sickly sweet. “In your sleep. You scream his name, Mr. Graham, did you know that? You scream it so loud the whole ward can hear. You say, H – ”

“Don’t you *dare* to say his name,” Will hisses, and the vulture cracks and peels to reveal a startled doctor in a white coat, proffering a clipboard with various papers on it.

The man swallows, but then regains his confidence when he remembers Will’s in a straightjacket tied to a heavy chair. He offers the clipboard again.

“We can help you. We can make you forget whatever . . . or whoever . . . is holding you back. And then you can rejoin society, live a productive life, be free. Isn’t that what you want, Mr. Graham?”

Will shrugs. He’s already made one bargain with the devil. What’s another? At least the vultures will stop trying to steal his fish.

He signs.

---

In the distance, a woman perched in a tree with a sniper rifle sighs. Time for action, then.

---

Will’s door opens abruptly in the middle of the night, startling him enough to dump him out of the stream.

“Chiyoh?” Will says, sitting up. “What are you doing here?”

Chiyoh gives him a Look, and straightens to tuck away the lockpick set in her hand. Strangely, she has no rifle with her today, but Will’s fairly sure she doesn’t need it against the guards here, who are overly reliant on drugged up or zoned out patients.

“Apparently,” Chiyoh says, “I am in the business of reminding you of your true self. Again.”

Will slumps against the wall. “Oh. That.”

“Are you going to come willingly this time, or must I throw you off the train again?”

“Do whatever you like. I’m done.” Will closes his eyes and starts to fade back into the stream. “There’s nothing left for me now, Chiyoh. I’ve exhausted violence, I’m afraid.”

The crane cocks her head, intense and bored all at the same time. “You would give up on the one you called nakama?”

“He’s dead, Chiyoh. There’s nothing left to give up on.”

“Come with me, Will Graham,” the crane sighs. “There is still much to teach you, I see.”

“No.”

“Will.”

“No.”

The guards catch up then, and Chiyoh surrenders and lets them start to drag her away as Will curls back up on his bed, watching as the crane delicately steps through the stinging nettles, agile and dangerous as always, until the crane turns back around and spreads her wings for the final blow.

“He’s alive, Will.”

“Who, Jack? I know.”

“Hannibal.”

The stream dries up, instantly, and Will sits bolt upright. “That’s impossible,” Will breathes, as Chiyoh elegantly dodges the grabby hands of her guards without seeming to move at all from where she stands. “Jack said – ”

“You know as well as I do, Will Graham,” the crane says, “nothing is impossible for Hannibal Lecter.”

The next five minutes pass in a blur, as Will leaps into action to disable the guards, taking out all of his pent up rage and frustration on them, punching and biting and scratching, vicious and without mercy, until all of them lie crumpled and groaning on the ground and Will is left victorious and bloody and panting.

Chiyoh raises an eyebrow. “Noisy, but effective. Come.”

Will follows, as helpless as he was the first time, buoyed by a strange sense of hope that burns in his chest and the elation that rises with every nurse and guard he passes that Chiyoh rendered unconscious.

She would not have gone to such effort for Will alone, he knows. So he hopes.

---

Will cries when he sees Hannibal at long last, one very long awkward drive and one even longer climb up a dark staircase later. Hannibal is lying in a bed, weakened and covered in bandages, but he too cries when he sees Will, although certainly less noisily and less messily.

“My own, my Will,” Hannibal says, running his hands all over Will’s body as if anointing him. “My darling, my dearest, my beloved, here you are at last.”

“How – ” Will says.

Hannibal kisses him. “I was declared dead at the hospital, luckily, because I was so weak, and Chiyoh followed us, so she helped me to escape. Unfortunately, by then they had already begun the process of transporting you, and I was too weak to interfere. I did not – I did not

predict that they would use my death as a weapon against you.” Hannibal takes a great breath and scents him, taking great deep inhalations as if Will might be torn away forever. “My beloved, I could not have abandoned you to live this life alone. My heart beats only for you.”

“They asked me to forget you,” Will says.

“You said it yourself,” Hannibal replies. “Our boundaries are so blurred that to erase one is to erase us both. We must move forward together, or forever be lost.”

“Together down the rabbit hole, then?”

“Of course. For all our days to pass.”

FINIS

## Chapter End Notes

Tomorrow is Day 13: "Werewolves"! Join me when I finally give [victorine](#) the ABO thing I've been promising that goes with a very . . . interesting gif. :D

Also, this ficlet was inspired by [this scene from Once Upon A Time In Wonderland](#). Just imagine our murder puppy Will kicking all of those guards' butts while Chiyoh's cool as a cucumber in the background/exasperated that Will never listens.

# Werewolves

## Chapter Summary

Will is the newly turned werewolf about to enter in the fight for his life. His opponent?  
A very curious alpha named Hannibal Lecter.

## Chapter Notes

Warnings: More implied smut. Also more attempted murder (AKA Will got stabby again, but with wolf claws and knives this time)

This fic was already whirling around in my brain for a while, but [this gift set](#) truly got the ball rolling, thank you so much to my heroine victorine for it!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

When Will wakes up, his head is fuzzy, he's freezing cold, and he's stuck in a tiny cage surrounded by shouting men who stink of greed and fear. When he tries to stand, he finds his hands and legs bound to the floor of the cage with silver chains, and the more he pulls, the more they sting, until finally he just collapses and shivers in a heap at the bottom of the cage.

One man prods at the cage. "He looks too young," he grunts.

The man who's holding the key to the cage looks undeterred. "He's young but he's a werewolf, they all look young," he says. "More importantly, he's recently turned, just got bit last month. He'll make an excellent fighter if you have what it takes to train him well."

Most of the men look unconvinced, and Will doesn't blame them. He looks like a fluffy puppy at the bottom of a cage, shivering and weak, and not enough to put up any kind of decent fight that would bring the money and the crowds that most men pay to see werewolves clash in. Not to mention that as an omega, his instinct is to turn tail and get away from danger, not run towards it. He fights only when cornered, because most of the time, alphas have the natural edge of strength, and speed can only help so much when a great big alpha wolf is sitting on your back.

Will's seller keeps boasting all the same. "Freshly caught werewolf!" he shouts gleefully. "Freshly caught at the last full moon, recently turned, ready to fight!"

"Well, well, well," says a new man, dressed in a fancy coat with a fancy cane. "What have we here?"

“Freshly – ”

“Shut up,” the man says. “I want to see his reaction. Shock him, will you?”

Will has only a second to think before the cage lights up with electricity, and even though most of the myths about silver and electricity don’t have any special effect against werewolves, sending powerful currents through anybody still hurts, and Will can’t stop the reflexive thrashing and howling as lightning bites into his muscles.

“Excellent!” the man says. “I’ll take him.”

“I – I’m so honored, Mr. Verger, thank you, let me just gather its things for you.”

Verger ignores the man, leaning down instead to put his face right next to Will’s panting, drooling one. “Hello, little omega,” the man purrs. “I think I’ve got just the right alpha for you.”

---

Cage fights between werewolves are technically illegal, but most of law enforcement tends to turn a blind eye. Most people would prefer to see “dirty mutts” dying and fighting than “pure humans”, and of course animal cruelty is unthinkable.

So this is why Will finds himself trapped in a tiny cage, being injected with all sorts of weird concoctions to ensure he’s fighting fit.

He doesn’t bother trying to speak. These men don’t care that Will has a life outside being a werewolf, that he was once a police officer himself, that he only became a werewolf after failing to shoot down a suspect, that it’s only going to be his second full moon and he has no idea how to fight in his wolf body. They want a bloody fight, and all the better for an alpha driven feral with drugs to tear apart a whining, scratching omega.

Finally, though, the sun sets, and Will finds himself dumped into a large arena instead, of all things, a horse barn. The hard wood floor bruises his hands and knees when he tumbles out of the cage as the men callously tip him into the arena, and the guests cheer and leer at him, naked and shivering on the floor.

Will doesn’t notice, to be honest. All of his attention is focused on the alpha that’s tied down at the other hand, collared like a dog and blood all over his face. He’s older and to Will’s young senses he smells like danger, someone experienced and capable and definitely bearing the marks of successful victories in the past. To Will’s horror, a man kneels down and carefully cuts one rope, and the next thing Will knows, the alpha has freed himself of the remaining ropes and standing, removing his collar with an elegant roll of his shoulders, nostrils flaring and eyes closed as he takes in the scents of the arena.

In another life, a part of Will might’ve sat up and taken notice, because it isn’t like this alpha is lacking. He’s older than Will, certainly, but with age comes the surety of movement and strength of experience that Will can see as the alpha rolls his shoulders and flexes his muscles, calm and certain. His scars are signals of battles hard won, and the grey hair that dots his chest and head are signifiers of an alpha who knows how to survive at any cost.

Every part of him, from head to torso to legs to toe, is impressive, and Will has never felt more caught between the flight or mate reflex than he is now, looking at this alpha who could be his protector or his killer.

Unfortunately, then the alpha's eyes open, and Will knows he's doomed, because he can see that this alpha has the eyes of someone with no mercy left to give.

Will bolts for the edge of the arena, where the walls are slippery and tall, and prays helplessly as he scrabbles at the walls, but then he screams and falls back as the alpha grabs his ankle and flings him down to roll on the ground.

"Fight, pup," the alpha says, accented and amused, "or die."

"I don't want to fight!"

The alpha crouches like the wolf he truly is, hands and knees, teeth bared in the dim light. "You won't have a choice," the alpha says. "Already the moon calls for blood."

And sure enough, Will risks a glance at the walls, where the moon is already creeping upwards, and he can feel the wolf-blood begin to sing.

For the next few moments, Will forgets about the alpha – about the arena, about the fight, about his death sentence. He's more concerned about how he's essentially dying right then and there, as the moon pulls at him to make his blood surge and his bones break and his skin stretch, and all around him Will drowns in the cheers of the humans as he throws his head back and howls his agony to mother moon in the same moment as every other wolf, a haunting chorus of howls as his brother and sister wolves all lift their throats to the sky and scream their pain, their joy, their death and birth in the same moment.

When his eyes open again, he is no longer Will-Graham-the-human. He is Will the wolf, who crouches and snarls at the black wolf with an bloody muzzle and dots of grey hair, lazily licking his chops.

The alpha is huge, to be sure, bigger than Will many times over. If he were to step on Will's back, he could probably snap Will's spine in half.

But Will has speed. And speed can deliver a deathblow.

Will lunges forward, to the side and clawing across the wall, to twist and whirl with his teeth locked for a death bite on the alpha's shoulders. The alpha anticipates it enough to turn to face Will head on, but it doesn't mean he escapes from the stunning blow of all of Will's weight essentially crashing into his face. Together they bite and rip and scratch, snarling and ferocious, until Will finally seizes an opening and bites down hard enough on the alpha's back leg enough to crack bone.

The alpha howls, throwing him off, and limps backwards.

Will gets to his feet, his wolf-blood singing for death, but to his horror, the alpha shakes his leg, and as Will watches the bone sinks back into fur and the wound closes, as good as new,

and the alpha grins a wolf-smile at Will, crouching and ready to pounce again.

A horrified whine nearly slips past Will's teeth, but he bites it down. Omega he may be, but he will bow to no upstart. He is Will-the-wolf and he will fight to the death, as all wolves do.

The alpha is just about to leap forward when the world bursts into a sudden explosion of lights and sound as humans smelling of gun oil and crackling tasers charge into the barn on all side, shooting bodyguards, tackling those who flee, and in general bringing more chaos than Will's wolf senses can handle. Disoriented, he backs away from the voices coming closer, and to his shock the alpha leaps forward to land in front of him, teeth bared and a vicious snarl emerging from his teeth, causing the humans to pause in fear and surprise.

If Will were human, he might realize that these people were the FBI, here to break up the fighting ring and save him.

But Will is Will-the-wolf, and all he sees is a clear shot at the door, where he might flee to the safety of the outside, so instead of surrendering, Will launches himself forward, using the alpha's enormous size as a springboard to sail over the shouting humans and land at the edge of the arena, where only a few feet lies between him and the outside.

He takes it.

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Will runs until his paws bleed, and then he keeps on running, faster and longer, until each breath is a stab in his side and he collapses, barely able to breathe, much less run.

He sleeps, unaware, as an enormous alpha wolf with blood red eyes and soft steps emerges from the darkness, testing the air before padding forward to stand guard over the fallen pup, a lone sentry of nightmares to keep the horrors of the darkness at bay.

---

When Will wakes, it's to a stick poking him in the back.

He groans and rolls over, becoming slowly aware of the world around him. There are leaves in his hair, dirt on his back, and sticks poke at his legs and arms. He is human again, as newly turned wolves usually can't control the shift for a while, and whilst all wolves turn at the rise of the full moon, experienced wolves can also transform at other times or hold the transformation steady, even when the sun rises.

"I'm a dirty human," Will mutters with a sigh, pulling stray leaves from his hair. "But at least I can talk again."

A low, amused whuff at his back makes Will yelp, and he scrambles around to find a huge black wolf sitting patiently in the leaves, blood red eyes and a tail that swishes slowly from left to right.

Will sniffs, and he snarls. It's the damn alpha again. "Why'd you follow me?"

The alpha stands and pads closer, like a circling predator, before suddenly rising up on his back paws and blurring in a smooth transformation into his human form, with the only signs of pain some tightness around his strange maroon eyes.

“It is the duty of every alpha to care for the new wolves,” the alpha says.

“You tried to kill me!”

“And you were the one able to land a blow on me,” the alpha returns, eyes gleaming. “It was most impressive. No one has managed such a feat in decades.”

Will hugs his knees close and wishes for the comfort of fur. “You still tried to kill me.”

“Not quite. I – ”

That’s when the FBI finally catches up, and Will is whisked away by the scolding EMTs who give him clothes and force needles into his veins, and it is only later he learns that the alpha was in fact a doctor whom the FBI had used to as witness on the inside, passing information to the FBI for the operation and actually not killing any of the wolves in the arena, merely wounding, as his helpers on the inside had faked the deaths and smuggled the wolves out until, finally, the alpha had used his “get-out” signal, and they had stormed the arena to take it down.

“But why now? What changed?” Will asks, bewildered.

The EMT gives him a look. “What do you think?”

Will doesn’t know what to think. His head is still spinning with the news that Verger is being charged and he is free. Luckily, another EMT takes pity on him, and Will falls asleep on the way to the hospital.

---

When Will wakes up again, it’s to a welcome and familiar face.

“Hey, Beverly,” Will says.

Beverly Katz grins and salutes him with her coffee cup. They’d run into each other during his days as a cop, because she’d been the only person to treat him normally and he’d gravitated to her morbid sense of humor.

“Yeah, don’t bother covering up,” Beverly says cheerfully. “I saw it all, man. All of it.”

“What?”

“What, you don’t think I sat around and did nothing, do you? I was the woman on the inside, Graham, I saw it all. Including that lovely display last night. Thanks for jumping over my head, by the way, and not using me as the springboard.”

Will blushes, but her matter-of-fact nature helps a little. Beverly always did used to know how to talk to him, no matter what mood he was in.

“They went to you?”

“Hell, yeah. No one expects the Katzquision.”

There’s a moment of silence.

“That was terrible.”

“I disagree.”

“No, it really was,” Will says, and finally gives into the impulse to laugh, laughing so hard that a monitor actually starts beeping in alarm.

“Are you disturbing my patient, Agent Katz?”

Beverly says, “What, me?” at the same time that Will snarls, “YOU AGAIN?!”

The doctor, whose name badge reads H. Lecter, merely smiles and clicks a pen. “I see you’ve regained balance with your enhanced senses,” he says, cheerful as anything. “I noticed that scent was not noted as your strongest sense when you first turned, so it is good that you are beginning to find your feet.”

Will contemplates throwing his plastic cup at Lecter’s head, and Beverly seems to notice the murderous glint in his eye, because she quickly says, “Hey, Will, this is Hannibal Lecter. He, um, kinda saved your butt. And mine too.”

Will, derailed, says, “Hannibal?” because there’s old-fashioned names, and then there’s “Hannibal.”

Hannibal fricking Lecter beams and holds out his hand. “Nice to meet you.”

“I saw you naked and tried to bite your throat out, and you still think we need introductions?”

Hannibal’s smile grows even wider, if that’s possible, even though in truth all that happens is his lips twitch an inch and his eyes crease. Will gets the impression this alpha doesn’t express his emotions too boldly. “Of course,” Hannibal says. “Proper introductions are always nice. Especially when an alpha welcomes an omega to his pack.”

“Oh, I’m in *your* pack now?”

Hannibal leans over the bed and inhales deeply, causing Will to release a reflexive snarl that makes Hannibal chuckle.

“Oh, pup,” Hannibal says. “You could be. Let me show you how to be a real wolf, Will Graham. Let me show you how to jump, how to fight, how to hunt. I would make you a wolf the whole world would be envious of.”

Will glares up at him, and glares even more when he feels the enthusiastic twitch of his nether regions of the idea of this alpha, who smells like paper and meat and flour, teaching him anything, but especially anything involving hunting. “Go away.”

Hannibal laughs and withdraws. “Very well,” he says, “I accept your challenge. Let me prove myself to you.”

Will responds by mashing the call nurse button. “I want a new doctor,” he announces.

---

A month later finds them mating like wolves on Hannibal’s bed, tearing the sheets and snarling at each other’s throat as Hannibal growls and flexes, driving Will forward in powerful thrusts as his feral eyes betray the animalistic nature of his rising wolf. Will responds with his own thrusts, clawing at Hannibal’s back with wolf claws, pulling sounds of pain and delight from Hannibal’s throat the same way Hannibal’s thrusts draw exhilaration from Will.

When it’s over, Hannibal collapses besides him, sweaty and self-satisfied, and Will tries to stop his racing heart.

“I think we just ruined your sheets again.”

Hannibal snorts. “You are all too fond of using your wolf claws in human form,” Hannibal says, but his tone is anything but reprimanding. Hannibal rarely reprimands Will for anything, anyways, teaching and rewarding with positive feedback instead of punishing Will for his mistakes.

“Says the wolf who bite me so hard it took a day for my neck to stop bleeding,” Will retorts.

“Wounds from alphas can take longer to heal.”

“Wow, such an apologetic tone I hear.”

“It was your feelings of insecurity that drew you to provoke me into biting you,” Hannibal says, entirely too amused for Will’s liking. “I would ask why you came home in such a furious mood, but I suppose that I guess equally well. I imagine someone made an ill-timed jab at your masculinity. Am I getting warm?”

Will snarls and rolls over, pinning Hannibal with his legs and arms, which now are stronger than ever thanks to Hannibal’s constant, careful guiding hand. Hannibal laughs and leans back, exposing his throat, not at all bothered, and Will guesses that if he truly wanted, he could probably toss Will off in a moment’s notice. Mostly because he knows, as well as Will knows, that he’s unfortunately quite correct about the way people talk behind Will’s back now his wolfy secret is out in the open, and along with it the knowledge that he lives with a well-known alpha.

“Are you calling me less of a man because I like taking it up the arse?” Will spits.

Hannibal merely cocks his head. “That depends on whether or not your definition of masculinity rests upon who penetrates and who receives.”

“Does yours?”

“Certainly not. Although you’re more than welcome to test it.”

Will blinks, thrown. Generally Hannibal steers his anger into fighting or destroying more bed frames, so this is the first time Hannibal's ever actually stopped to talk it out. It's actually a little disconcerting, but Will used to think it was because Hannibal spends most of his time in the ER expending his energy in action, so he generally allows Will to cope the same way.

"What?"

Hannibal actually spreads his legs. "I said, you are more than welcome to test it."

"I don't – "

"You know from firsthand the pleasure it can bring," Hannibal says, and curse him because Will can feel a significant interest returning to his nether regions at Hannibal's careful, teasing tone. "Do you feel that I would feel that taking you into my body would somehow diminish my status as your alpha?"

"Hannibal – "

"Lubrication is in the third drawer."

The second round of frantic mating sends them on the floor, because Will gets a little too enthusiastic about moving and Hannibal's eager pushback sends them tumbling off the bed onto the floor, where they land with a painful thud that doesn't stop them in the least bit. They end breaking the drawer as well as the bed frame, and Hannibal merely laughs, eyes closed and throat bared, among the shattered wood pieces as he climaxes, gripping Will hard enough to bruise as Will lets go of his own release.

In a split second, Will seizes the knife from under the bed and has it leveled as Hannibal's vulnerable throat.

Hannibal smiles a wolf-smile. "Ah, yes, I wondered when you put that to good use," the alpha remarks with a yawn. "When did you find out?"

"Verger fed me human meat too," Will says. "I can recognize the taste of my fellow man."

And there are so many things Hannibal, who is normally so talkative, could say to that. He could say, "And how does that make you feel?" He could say, "But you're not quite a fellow human anymore, are you, Will?" He could even say, "And what are we going to do about that?"

Instead, Hannibal says, "Do it."

"What?"

"Do it. You have the power to kill me in your hands, right now," Hannibal says, calm as ever. "That knife is sharp enough to slice my throat too deeply for me to heal fast enough, or, I suppose, long enough to damage my heart beyond my body's ability to repair. You could even remove my head entirely, as most guides advocate severing the spinal cord to ensure that werewolves cannot return."

“I . . .”

Hannibal leans forward, the crazy wolf, and a red line appears at his throat. “Well, my love? Will you end this?”

Will stares into the eyes of the wolf who’s killed an immeasurable number of victims, who’s celebrated in their pain and fed their flesh to his friend, who’s beyond any definition of anyone or anything – who’s Will’s greatest friend, his most protective provider, his most passionate partner. Hannibal has guided Will out of the dark and into the light, shielding him from the FBI and the press alike, and at the moment, Will’s not sure if he sees either the Chesapeake Ripper or his beloved alpha when he sees Hannibal.

He sees both, and he sees neither, for they are one and the same, shadows in the back of Hannibal’s vast mind, twins and opposites both.

Will presses down, preparing for the fatal slice – and flings the knife away.

“I can’t,” Will gasps, scrambling away, shuddering, the adrenaline rush shaking his entire body. “I can’t, I can’t, I can’t, I can’t, I can’t, Hannibal – ”

His alpha swallows him whole, enshrouding him in familiar darkness as Hannibal hugs him close and licks at his tears like a wolf mother tends her pups. Against his will, he finds himself pressing ever closer to the familiar scent and touch of his alpha, turning to Hannibal and opening like a flower to the sun, accepting Hannibal into his heart and mind and body, falling off the cliff into the darkness with only the trust in his alpha’s all-consuming possessiveness to keep him from drowning.

“Oh, my Will,” Hannibal says, with a satisfied wolf-smile. “And how did it feel, to hold my life in your hands?”

“You already know.”

“Of course I do. I made you. But I would still hear you say it.”

“It made me feel . . . strong,” Will says, finding the strength to grip at Hannibal’s skin and raise his eyes to meet Hannibal’s red ones. “I felt righteous. I felt . . . *powerful*.”

Hannibal smiles, and for the first time Will sees the wolf-smile for what it truly is: the smile of a Ripper.

“My love,” his alpha says, both Hannibal Lecter and the Chesapeake Ripper at once, everything Will’s ever feared or hoped for all rolled together in one all-consuming darkness, “we will make a wolf of you yet.”

FINIS

Join me tomorrow for Day 14: "Candy"! I present to you: my take on Hannigram if they were dragons. Or I will, when I actually write it. I do know that it will involve jokes about dead bodies and candy. I apologize in advance.

I also apologize for the sorta random time jump towards the end there. I knew where I wanted to go, but I sorta ran out of time to really flesh it out. I hope it's not too terribly jarring for everyone, and if you didn't mind it, I may return to this verse later to, you know, do some proper Hannigram courting and ish. Along with all the other ficlets I want/need to return to.

# Candy

## Chapter Summary

Normally dragon courting rituals don't involve elaborately posed dead bodies, but Will supposes that Hannibal is a little strange even by the criteria of medieval mythical monsters.

## Chapter Notes

Warnings: poor roasted humans, and a sad Disney backstory where the parents die

Another story with a really loose connection to the prompt, but you all really loved "Haunted Mansion" so much, given the feedback I got - which by the way, all of those comments were amazing and cherished and I promise to reply in a day or two - that all I can say for now is: You really thought I'd kill Hannibal? :D

Lastly, this fic was heavily inspired by [this dragon art](#), go check it out because it is just gorgeous.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

When Will was still in his egg, waiting for the right time to hatch, his parents used to sing to him, crooning the same songs their parents had crooned, telling their dragonlings that they were safe and loved and ready to hatch. Will's parents had sung it faithfully for nearly half a century before the conditions had truly been perfect for hatching, and then Will had emerged, blinking and damp, into the warm summer air, stretching his membrane thin wings and squeaking.

Will's father had been delighted, for his scales had been the beautiful deep blue of his egg, without a blemish to be seen – a rare thing, in an age where dragons were barely clinging onto their spot at the top of the monster food chain. Will's mother had fed him his first meal of meat and licked him clean, and together his parents had curled around him and protected him until his membranes and scales dried and hardened enough that a simple fall wouldn't have torn him in half.

Will spent the next decade growing bigger and bigger, learning how to pounce and sleeping next to the warmth of the fire in his parents' bellies.

Then the raiders came, and the rest of Will's clutch never hatched, for the raiders broke most of the eggs and baked the rest, killing the babies inside to preserve the gem-like shell of their

eggs. His father was felled by dozens of arrows, and his mother had emerged to defend them only to for slicing nets to be flung at her by catapults, sliding her wings into ribbons and shattering her scales.

Will hadn't even earned the power of fire yet, so all he could do bite and scratch when the raiders came for him, and when they tied him down all he could do was screech and cry for parents who would no longer answer the call.

That's when He came.

He was a giant red dragon, scales burnished and glowing like fire, with eyes as red as blood and horns a gleaming gold, mighty and ancient, old enough and big enough to match the size of most mountains. An earthquake heralded his approach, and his wing flaps made gusts enough to rival tornados. When he landed, most of the raiders fled, and those that didn't became dinner in the old dragon's belly.

In his panic, Will still bit him when the dragon nosed him.

The dragon laughed and carried him away, depositing him in another dragon colony with a gentle nudge towards the worried other nesting dragons, and then the dragon had flown away, ignoring Will's pleas and questions, and Will had never seen him again.

---

Most dragons consider Will different because of his past, and Will never corrects them. He never tells them what the great red dragon had said to him as he carried Will away from the bloodshed, and when he grows old enough for fire, it comes out a brilliant bright red, and most dragons shy from him.

Will's okay with that. Some dragons are meant to be loners.

This is why he's very startled when, at the turn of the seasons, he finds a delicately posed dead body outside his cave.

And, well, Will knows about courting rituals. Most of the time, dragons don't take kindly to offers of providing and protection, since there's very little that can harm a dragon aged enough to participate in courting flights, so food is less of an offer of providing, and more of a demonstration that they can hunt and hunt well on their own. To prove their worth, they prove that they are not trying to get fat off the hoards of others.

However, no one's ever bothered trying to court Will. He's too strange, too prickly, and his fire does not match his scales, something no one's ever seen.

So Will nudges the dead body out of the way, so that his entrance is clear again, and merely takes off, forgetting it in moments. In all likelihood, he reasons, someone just dropped it midflight and found it too small of a morsel to bother crossing into Will's territory to retrieve it.

Except.

Except the next day, there's another dead body.

Will kicks that one off the cliff. He does *not* want to deal with another joker thinking he's easy prey for mating.

The third day, he emerges to find the most elaborately posed offering of them all, a knight in shining armor who's been cooked to perfection, roasted in his armor to the perfect point where the meat is crisp without being overdone, and most of the armor carefully clawed or bitten apart so as to leave the shining presentation without making it too difficult for any dragon to nose it aside and retrieve the meat. The body is even surrounded by parts of the knight's sword and horse, decorative and elegant, like a message.

It's not that knights are a more prized offering, although they are more difficult. It's a statement at the same swords and nets that took down Will's parents were no challenge for this dragon.

Will snorts. "I can smell you," he calls out.

There's a huff, and then a tail swings into view before a black dragon clambers elegantly down the cliffside. He's about Will's age, maybe a decade or two older, and has scales as black as knight that gleam darkly under the sun. He's not particularly remarkable, save for the fact that his wings have feathers dotted along the membrane, and Will's never seen feathers on any dragon before. He smells like oak and spruce, with horns like burnished amber and, weirdly, a dead stork dangling half-eaten from his jaws.

"Hello, Will," the dragon says, swishing his tail.

"Are you incapable of keeping your dinner in your jaws?" Will asks pointedly.

The dragon cocks his head, and then dips it to disgorge the stork next to the knight, licking its chops clean of blood. It's very careful, his movements, but it's less about not wanting to startle the smaller sized dragon that Will is and more about the fact that this dragon is a little too large for the size of the ledge outside Will's cave, and if he moves too fast he's liable to fall right off.

Will kind of wants to see that.

"Who said that this was meant to be my meal?" the dragon returns.

Will mantles his wings, because maybe he's not as large, but his wings have the deadly tips at the end that all dragons have, and feathers or not, the claws can tear right through anyone's wing. "I can hunt for myself," he snarls.

The other dragon slinks a step closer, and then another, sniffing carefully, until Will becomes uncomfortable and takes a step back into his cave. "I know you can," the dragon says eventually, settling down at the entrance to cave like some great bristling cat. "I have watched you hunt. You are particularly skilled at diving, and your speed is to be commended. You are rather beautiful, like a crystallized raindrop falling from the sky."

In other words: *This is not because you cannot hunt. This is to show that I can.*

Will blinks, and his wings fall to his sides as curiosity makes him scent the air in return. The dragon does not smell like anger or the kind of interest that precedes Will getting chased out of his territory. Instead he smells like . . . flirting.

Will rears back, startled. No dragon's ever tried to court him.

The dragon preens, somehow seeming to understand what exactly is going through Will's rather confused mind. He spreads his wings himself, showing off the strength and elegance of his great black wings tipped with raven feathers and sharp ivory claws, a statement of power and prestige and beauty that has Will's own wings twitching in returned interest. Healthy, shiny wings means a healthy dragon.

"I would advise trying the heart first," the dragon says. "I find that it tastes remarkably similar to candy."

"Wait," Will protests, but the dragon is already leaping into the air, shooting up in a single flap of incredibly powerful wings, and he's gone before Will can even begin to try and follow him.

---

Will does eat the heart first. It does taste like candy, and Will eagerly tears into the rest of the offering before he can stop himself, until he finds himself sorrowfully licking at the bloody rocks for one last taste of delicious meat and has to tell himself to go to sleep before he embarrasses himself any further.

---

The dragon finds Will the next day as he dozes in the stream, his wings and limbs spread to allow the little fishes to nibble and groom at his scales, and Will's full belly means that all he does is snort in welcome, too full and warm to muster a threatening snarl.

"Hello again, Will."

Will cracks an eye open. "So should I keep calling you the knight-roaster, or do you have a proper name?"

The dragon smiles, wide and terrible with sharp teeth, and moves forward to nudge his nose close to Will's snout. It's a move of both great trust and familiarity, generally reserved for mates and family, yet Will feels no fear at the sight of those powerful jaws so close to his head. This dragon does not mean him harm, no matter how dangerous he truly is.

"My name is Hannibal," the dragon says. "Does this mean you accept my courting?"

"Depends on your hoard," Will answers honestly, because each dragon hoards different things, and if Hannibal's one of the dragons who hoards something that drives Will insane, all bets are off.

"Would you like to see?"

Will shakes himself off, splattering droplets everywhere, although Hannibal doesn't seem at all bothered. Interestingly, though, although the water quickly steams off from the heat that drives the life-fire in Will's belly, the water does not seem to do the same on Hannibal's scales, yet Hannibal just raises his wings and takes off.

Will shrugs and follows.

---

"You hoard *teacups*?" Will asks blankly, staring at the entire mountainous cavern filled to the absolute brim with teacups. Gold teacups, red teacups, blue teacups, silver teacups, teacups of all colors and sizes and shapes, some precious and gilded with jewels and others as plain as the leaves and dirt of Hannibal's territory.

Hannibal shuffles his claws, but not as if he's embarrassed. More like he's preparing himself for a lengthy and verbose explanation that Will's really that terribly interested in hearing.

This is mostly because Will finds that he's more charmed by Hannibal's hoard than annoyed.

"Where did you even find this stuff?" Will asks, nosing a particularly delicate teacup of spun filigree and set with sapphires.

Hannibal arches his neck. "I am older than I look."

"It's so shiiiiiiiiinnnyyyy," Will says, turning his head this way and that until he gets dizzy and has to lay down on the floor, dazed and blinking away images of reflected light.

He hears Hannibal laugh, and the black dragon pads over to curl next to Will, tangling their tails together shyly and pressing their bulk together. "I am glad that it pleases you," Hannibal says, amused and fond. "I imagine that I will have a similar reaction to your hoard, whenever you deign to show me."

"Um."

---

Hannibal immediately climbs the ceiling to a ledge when he sees Will's hoard, dangling precariously from the edges as he flares his wings and hisses reflexively, eyes narrowed in righteous anger at not being warned ahead of time.

Will looks up from where he's surrounded by his barking and jumping pack of joyous dogs and tries not to laugh.

---

All the same, when Will wakes up the next day, surrounded by several of his cuddliest dogs, he finds that same beautiful sapphire filigree teacup balanced on the ledge Hannibal had retreated to, and for the first time, Will smiles at the thought of being courted.

---

It takes some time to combine their lives together. Will's dogs tend to run wild across his territory, capable of finding their own food and water, and only returning when they wish to

snuggle with him, although they're all but glued to him in winter, basking in the warmth of his inner fire. Their rambunctious activities in no way endear them to Hannibal, who worries about the fragility of his collection, but after Will spits fire a few times, the dogs learn to leave a wide berth around the neatly organized piles of teacups. Hannibal, meanwhile, learns to only roll his eyes and say nothing whenever Will comes back with another dog.

But the best thing of all is that since Hannibal isn't from around here, he doesn't really care that Will was the last dragon the Great Red Dragon ever spoke to, and so he never pesters Will for the secrets the Dragon whispered in his ear.

This is mostly because Hannibal remains skeptical of a dragon of that size ever existing, but more because of the great secret Will discovers one summer when Hannibal overheats and becomes ill.

One great sneeze, and it's all out.

"You breathe *ice*?" Will yelps, prancing around and trying to melt off the icicles clinging to his wings.

Hannibal sneezes again, although this time he has the decency to create an ice bed on the floor instead of spraying icicles at Will again. The dogs are grateful, mainly because it's something fun and cool to roll in during the heat of summer, but Will, who tends to slip and crash ungracefully into walls even on good days, is less impressed.

"I am a dragon who hails from the north," Hannibal explains irritably. "Why would I breathe fire like you?"

Will stares, shakes his wings again, and then sighs when the icicles remain stubbornly on the edges of his wings. "Can you at least get these icicles off of me?"

Later on, when he recovers, Hannibal will get in the habit of making glorious little creations of ice with his breath for Will, who enjoys the flickering delicacy before they inevitably melt, and eventually it no longer seems quite so strange at all. Will keeps the dens warm during the winter with his fire, and Hannibal keeps the air cool during summer with his ice. Together, they are two strange twisted horns that lock together in one giant cycle, and eventually, Will looks back on his life and can't quite imagine it without his ice-breathing, feather-winged, teacup-hoarding, dog-fearing, knight-roasting Hannibal at his side.

FINIS

## Chapter End Notes

Tomorrow's prompt for Day 15 is "Leaf Pile"! It may or may not involve me ripping off another television show, but I unfortunately don't have the excuse of hopping networks because it's another ABC show. It's a different universe from Once Upon A Time In Wonderland and Arrow though. If any of you can guess it, I'll be terribly impressed lol.

Again, I can't thank you all enough, anyone who's left a comment or a kudo, you have seriously made my day. Like, I thought my Haunted Mansion fic was one of my weaker offerings cuz I felt like I was half-a\*\*ing the plot, but you all really gave me such great praise that it really helped make my day, so, from of the bottom of my heart, THANK YOU.

# Leaf Pile

## Chapter Summary

Will finds it in the leaf pile. Unfortunately, the great red dragon finds him shortly after, and what he unleashes changes both of their lives forever.

## Chapter Notes

Warnings: um . . . I really don't think anything, tbh

Aaaaaand the show I'll be ripping off this time is . . . Marvel's Agents of Shield! In particular, [this scene](#) where you see two Inhumans open the Diviner and go into the little cocoon thing and stuff. It's true that sometimes Agents of Shield bored or annoyed the hell out me (Skye in particular) but I personally felt the show and definitely Skye got a little better once the Inhumans were added to the mix.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Will is following a hunch for the latest weirdo serial killer – who Freddie Lounds has gleefully nicknamed the “Tooth Fairy” – when he finds it in a leaf pile by the dilapidated house.

It, of course, being a weird oblique object, like two silver-plated rectangles fused together with a twisting slant where they meet and sharp angular triangles cut deep into its many facets. It has strange symbols carved over its entire surface, and Will gets the feeling that it is almost humming as he approaches and pokes at it. He’s about to shift closer and get a better look when a man comes charging out of the house and slams full tilt into him.

“Ugh,” Will says.

“YOU CAN’T TOUCH IT!” the man shouts. “YOU AREN’T WORTHY!”

Will looks at the man and grows ever more resigned with each ticked off box: loner, easily obsessed, physically strong enough, right age range, and certainly shouty and showy enough to fit the elaborate murders.

Will sighs and thumps his back against the ground. “I don’t suppose you’ll come quietly?” Will asks.

The man crouches like an animal and leaps.

“Of course not.”

The man is fast and brutal with no mercy to give, but Will already knew that from seeing his crime scenes, so it's not really a surprise. And Will was a cop once, he remembers the agony of an unexpected punch and the startling pain of having your entire body flipped over. So Will puts his cop training to good use and kicks out, testing for weak points and giving as good as he gets, mostly because the Tooth Fairy kicked his gun away a long time ago and Will didn't exactly tell anyone where he was going on this hunch so he's pretty much on his own until Jack gets annoyed enough to GPS track his phone.

They're about evenly matched, although Will finds gets the advantage when he gets the man in a chokehold and pins him to the ground, praying, *Go to sleep, go to sleep, go to sleep, go to* –

Which is when Will staggers off, blinded and dazed, as the man stands up triumphant, the strange object clutched triumphantly in his hand. It's glowing bright orange, with all the symbols lit up like fiery lava, and the humming has gotten even louder than it was before.

“Human scum,” the man spits. “Like you could be worthy of a Becoming.”

He sets down the object with obvious flair and pride on a strange stone next to his front steps. Will had thought it was a particularly deformed, very old stone foundation, but since the object stands neatly without wobbling, perhaps, he concedes, he had been mistaken.

“What's that do?” Will demands, struggling to stand.

The case splits abruptly, unfolding like a strange silver flower, revealing jagged translucent blue crystals like rise from the depths as the case melts and flows like liquid silver into the basin of the strange stone. The humming grows louder and louder, and soon Will finds that even with his hands pressed over his ears, the humming follows him still, piercing and deep until his eyes water and his brain aches.

“Something beautiful,” the man says simply.

The crystals light up, a bright brilliant blue-white like starfire, and a strange mist explodes, heading in every direction and passing right through Will and the tooth fairy.

Will screams, because the mist passes through like a dagger passes through skin, neat and slicing but with burning agony that follows, and his agony turns to horror as Will stares down, uncomprehending, as stone starts to creep up his hands and knees, making his limbs so heavily he falls ungracefully to the floor. He scrapes helplessly at his hands, but the stone travels too quickly, and soon Will is left only to lie on the floor, tears dripping from his eyes, as the stone swallows him whole.

When the cavalry arrives, Jack and the team find Will and the tooth fairy lying insensate on the ground, both with strange scraps of stone-like wood around their prone bodies.

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“RECKLESS!” Jack roars, as Will stares at the ceiling blankly, fighting the urge to scratch the itchy spot where the IV enters his arm.

“YOU SHOULD’VE TOLD SOMEWHERE WHERE YOU WERE GOING! IT’S PROTOCOL, GRAHAM, YOU SHOULD FOLLOW IT, DAMN IT.”

Will starts counting the dots in the ceiling. It’s more engaging and unexpected than Jack’s spiel, anyways.

“Are you even listening to me?”

“It was reckless, why did I do it, I was stupid, I should’ve told someone,” Will recites immediately, because it is the exact same lecture he’s heard many times over. “Heard it, seen it, done it. Where’s the tooth fairy now?”

Jack levers a threatening finger at him. “No, you don’t, mister, you do NOT get to just brush it off like that. You almost *died*, Graham!”

Will feels the strangest surge in his gut, and for the first time when Jack bellows, Will somehow finds the strength to bellow back, feeling the strangest sense of tingling in his fingers and toes, almost like pins-and-needles, but somehow many times strong. “BUT I DIDN’T DIE,” Will screams back, gripping the railings so tightly his fingers turn white. “I LIVED AND I GOT THE BAD GUY, ISN’T THAT ALL YOU CARE ABOUT?!”

At that point, Will’s monitors go haywire, and the doctors brusquely escort Jack out, ignoring his threats and shouts, while Will is left to stare in horror at his fingers, which are almost . . . flickering. Like bits of skin are raising and falling in waves.

Will rubs his eyes, blinks a few times. Stares.

His hands look normal.

Will grumbles and curls back up under his blanket. *I need more sleep. I’m going insane. Or I need my eyes checked again.*

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Will is being discharged when there’s a huge commotion, and a security guard goes flying down the hall, causing screams and scattering nurses and doctors alike. Will goes for his gun, only to remember that Jack stormed off with it as petty payback for getting kicked out, and he groans when he hears the familiar shouting voice of the Tooth Fairy.

“Would you just give up?” Will exclaims, walking over. “You were caught, it’s over, you – ”

At that moment, Will turns the corner, and his voice dies a swift death in his throat.

That was the Tooth Fairy’s voice, all right, but what is standing in front of him is . . . not the same man as before. He’s much, much taller, and he’s lost all of his hair to needle-sharp spines that emerge from his head and upper shoulders. His nails are long and fierce, like a cat’s, and his eyes have gold cat eyes’ pupils. If Will didn’t know better, he would think he

had stepped into a set about an alien movie, but the bloody hands of the Tooth Fairy creature erase that unfortunate daydream immediately.

“You!” the Tooth Fairy shouts. “YOU STOLE THIS FROM ME! LOOK AT YOU! YOU’RE YOU AND I’M THIS! I WAS TO BURN YOU AND BECOME A DRAGON AND LOOK AT ME!”

Will stares. Takes a breath. Says, “What in the goddamn hell are you talking about?”

The Tooth Fairy roars like the insane dragon he wants to be and charges forward, leaping towards Will in great gaping strides – only to run straight into a illuminating blue wall of flowing light that suddenly swallows Will and the Tooth Fairy in two distinct crackling globes, like water bubbles made of lighting and iridescence. The Tooth Fairy tries to charge again, but the bubbles hold, and he beats himself against them like a feral animal.

A woman appears in the corner of Will’s eye, dressed in a gorgeous golden dress, skin the color of chocolate and hair that practically floats around her. She heads right for the Tooth Fairy, whispers something in his ear that stuns him into silence, and hugs him to vanish.

Will blinks and wonders what kind of report this is going to be.

And then, quite suddenly, the globes light up again, and the woman in back, smiling straight at Will and heading straight for him, which is when Will realizes that she has no eyes.

Not like she’s blind or like her eyes are sunken into her face or anything.

She has *no eyes*. All that’s left in a smooth blankness where her eyes should be, yet she moves towards Will with confidence and accuracy, smoothing out her dress as it billows around her with each step.

“Who are you?” Will says, raising his fists.

The woman touches one, and it’s like an electric shock, so strong he freezes, ice and heat all at once raising through his body, like every cell is on alert saying, *I know you*.

“Come on, beautiful,” the woman says, soft and sweet like a melody, “let me show you the way.”

This time, when the cavalry finally arrives, they find nothing but blood and empty hallways and scattered bodies.

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When Will wakes up to find a tall, dark, brooding man hanging over his bed, he does the reasonable thing and tries to bash the man’s head in.

Unfortunately for him, the man is much stronger, has a position with better leverage, and seems to have predicted his move, because he easily resists Will’s attempts and pins him back quite easily with one large hand.

“Calm yourself, Will Graham,” the man says, “I’m a doctor.”

“Who in the goddamn hell are you?” Will spits.

The man raises an eyebrow. “My name is Hannibal Lecter. You are safe among us, I promise. You may relax.”

Will stares. “Way to answer absolutely none of my questions in a way that makes sense,” he says. “Some doctor you are.”

“I assure you, I received my medical degree from John Hopkins in good faith,” the man replies. “And I had a successful residency and a current practice. I imagine – ”

“Who’s us?” Will interrupts.

The man steps neatly to the side, and Will’s eyes nearly bulge out of his head at the sight of a man levitating outside the door, while other people neatly sidestep him, not seemingly at all bothered by the *floating man* next to him.

“Our own kind,” Lecter says. “Welcome to Lai Shi.”

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After Will’s done hyperventilating, Hannibal gives him a much better explanation, even if it involves a tad more flowery elaboration than Will thinks is warranted. But he’s beginning to suspect that that is less about the explanation and more about how Hannibal talks, so he gives mostly a pass.

It turns that Lai Shi is more commonly called Afterlife (“The monolingualists among us call it Afterlife,” Hannibal had said, eyes smiling, and Will had duly ignored him) and is a haven for people like the Tooth Fairy, like the woman with no eyes, and like Hannibal. They are all Inhumans, people descended from genetically changed humans set on Earth by an alien race, and although most of them start off life looking, sounding, and acting just like regular humans, exposure to Terrigen mist (“More commonly called a Becoming”) can trigger the genetic changes that lead to freaky powers like floating man and the teleporting woman.

“So if all the Inhumans are here . . . why wasn’t I here?” Will asks.

Hannibal shrugs, an elegant, minimal lift and drop of his shoulders. “Not all of our brothers and sisters are granted the birthright of Terrigenesis. Some choose not to be exposed and some are refused the right, and they live among us without ever undergoing a Becoming. Some of those choose to return to the outside world, to live their lives out there and take partners and have children. And not all of those prodigal children return here.”

“ . . . You’re saying I’m like a long-lost son or something?”

Hannibal stands up and starts finishing whatever notations he’d been making in the chart hanging off Will’s bed. “If you were not one of us, Will,” Hannibal says, voice serious, “you would not be here. Regular humans who are exposed to the Terrigen mist do not survive a Becoming.”

Will stares. “And you just had that . . . that thing that could kill any normal human just hanging around for anyone to pick up?” he exclaims.

Hannibal’s head whips around at the accusation. “Of course not!” he says, sounding downright insulted. “Our Kree ancestors left us with six of the Diviners to conduct Becomings amongst ourselves. One of us who was not chosen for a Becoming stole a Diviner years and years ago.”

“That’s not helping my opinion of your abilities.”

“Then know this: without the Diviners, our people would cease to exist. We have no quarrels with humanity, and no interest in revealing ourselves. What use would we have to unleash a Diviner upon the unwitting?”

“I was unwitting,” Will points out.

Hannibal smiles at that. “Perhaps. But you are the exception, not the rule.”

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After giving him the all-clear, Hannibal brings Will before what he says is the council that runs Afterlife, composed of the elders amongst the Inhumans. Most of them are indeed elders, with graying and white hair and stooped backs, but all of them radiate a sense of power and wisdom that makes Will want to fidget as he sits before them and undergoes their piercing eyes.

“This is Will Graham,” Hannibal announces with a short bow. “He is one of those whom we lost, many years ago, now returned to us by the grace of a Becoming.”

One of the elders, a woman with stark scars on her face and wrists, leans forward. She is one of the only younger-looking elders, but her eyes are ancient and proud. “And what is your impression, Hannibal?”

Will shoots Hannibal a betrayed look as the man simply smiles and takes one of the empty seats in the circle. Not entirely familiar with the Council’s choices, Hannibal had said, which is so blatantly a lie Will almost wishes he could try and bash his head again.

“He is perhaps a little older than our ideal age,” Hannibal says. “But not too far gone. He has the strength to adapt to whatever gifts the Diviner has bestowed upon him.”

The woman hums and turns to Will. He can feel her doubts like little needles pricking at his skin. “And what is your gift, child?”

“I . . . don’t know?”

The woman frowns at that, but another man leans forward. He has white hair and the clouded eyes of someone who can no longer see, but his grip is steady and his voice is strong when he speaks. “Give the child time, Jiaying,” the man says. “Even those among us who were prepared and groomed for a Becoming sometimes were unsure what gifts had been unlocked.

He needs time to learn about our people and to train. I am sure that in time, he will be a valuable asset to our people.”

“Perhaps,” says another woman, who has feathers for hair and talons for nails, with fierce eagle eyes. “But that doesn’t mean he does not bring danger with him. He has a life, and that life will go looking for him.”

“Yet he retains his appearance,” Hannibal interjects. “Forgive me, but whatever gift he has, it does not involve such a drastic appearance as yourself. In time, if he wishes, he may return to his life to settle his affairs and return to Lai Shi, or return there once he has settled.”

“Enough,” Jiaying says shortly. “All of this is pointless at this time.” She turns back to Will, and this time, her doubts are more like hot pokers, grinding slowly into his skin, and this time he can’t hold back the wince and drops from the piercing sparks that are her eyes. “These are questions that you and you alone can answer, Will Graham. So I ask you: do you wish to return to your life? Or do you wish to remain here with my kind and learn to master whatever you have become?”

Will takes a long, deep breath. Practical discussions – he can handle that, right? “I need to return at least to call off the search,” he says honestly. “The last thing my colleagues knew, I was sparring with a wanted serial killer in a hospital. Right now they’re going to assume I’m kidnapped or dead, and they’ll hunt me down as long as it takes for proof of either. Not to mention the camera footage that – ”

“Has already been taken care of,” says the eagle-eyed woman. “You might say . . . some of us have a way with computers.”

“I’m still a teacher and a consultant with the FBI. I need to end that.”

“So you wish to live with us? And learn?” Hannibal asks.

Will swallows. “I do.” And realizes that he really, really does. He wants to learn about the mother he never knew, who had secrets he never could have comprehended. He wants to see if maybe, just maybe, he’s not the weirdest freak among these people, who seem to somehow, for some reason, want to call him their own. He wants to see if maybe, here, he can belong.

Jiaying sighs, and Will can practically feel the tension release in her. She is fierce and without mercy, Will senses, but above all she loves her people first. If Will is one of them, she is willing to accept it, and protect and love him as she loves all of her charges. It’s surprisingly heartening, for someone so old and embittered about the world.

“Then it is done,” Jiaying says, and stands up. She walks to stand in front of them, and then, surprisingly, embraces him with a kiss on the forehead. “Welcome to Lai Shi, my son.”

The other elders stand solemnly and file out after her, each repeating the strange ceremony of an embrace and a kiss and the seemingly traditional words, although each offers it in a different language, and one man, whose skin glows like lava, does not embrace Will at all but merely bows his head. When they have all left, it leaves on Hannibal, still sitting with a little smile on his face, and Will.

“What was that about you not having any idea what the council might say?” Will says, before Hannibal can speak.

“The council consists of far more than simply me. I truly could not predict where they would go.”

“You’re the one they turn to for advice.”

Hannibal hums dismissively. “Perhaps. But only because I remain one of the few with constant contact with the outside world. Jiaying is the judge and jury here, and what she says goes. If she had felt you too dangerous for our people, then you would no longer exist.”

“She’d kill me?”

Hannibal shakes his head, slowly. “There are far worse and far easier ways to erase you than to kill you,” is all he says.

“How welcoming,” Will says sarcastically, but even he can tell the heart isn’t there. He understands why the other elders look to Jiaying. She has the will to lead and make the terrible choices, and he can’t condemn her for it. “So, uh . . . how do I go about unlocking these gifts you keep talking about?”

To his surprise, Hannibal merely laughs and gestures him closer. “Oh, I think you’ve already proven you can unlock your gift,” he says, and turns Will to face one of the mirrors that flanked the panel of elders.

Will lets out a very undignified yelp at the sight of himself in the mirror. Mostly because he is no longer looking at Will Graham, but a precise copy of Jiaying, even down to the elaborate twists in her braided hair and the scars that mark her face and wrists. Even her clothes are accurate, with the flowing dark blue fabric and tall boots, and even his voice, when he speaks, sounds more like Jiaying than himself.

“How long have I been like this?!”

“Since Jiaying decided not to kill you,” Hannibal says smugly. “Your empathy is quite a powerful thing, isn’t it?”

“I hate you all.”

“Now, now. We have not even had a single meal together yet. You will find much better reasons to hate us once we begin a normal training routine.” Hannibal pauses. “Although tonight they are also holding a capture the flag event, so perhaps you might find better reasons to hate us there too.”

“Why?”

“Let’s just say that powers are allowed and encouraged, and the children tend to take the game rather seriously.”

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Jack puts up the expected squabbles, but for the most part, the FBI is glad to see the back of Will in the wake of the rather embarrassing escape of the Tooth Fairy, so he just shrugs and packs everything up, closing out his house. Reba, who is the teleporter who had first rescued Will, arrives cheerily to help transport everything Will needs, and even offers to help care for some of Will's pack, since they'll be spread out among the Inhumans while Will trains. He was surprised but rather gratified that so many offered to help, and even Jiaying sneaks in a pet or two to the dogs when they finally arrive.

Will trains individually with each of the elders in attempt to find his mentor, because each has a different specialty. All of them are brutally hard in their own way, but Will finds he enjoys the challenge, enjoys that when he snaps and shouts, they snap and shout back, and at the end of the day, no one cares that Will occasionally slips and adopts someone else's face by mistake.

Some people even start making requests, in fact, and one day when Reba is late with the standard Chicago pizza and popcorn for a movie night, Will takes to entertaining people with his ability, and is left breathless and stunned at the depth of his joy with the way his people just sort of . . . accept it. All of it.

When Will mentions it, Hannibal merely smiles. "We are all unique, in our own way," he says. "It is our policy to welcome the differences, not ostracize them. We were born to be different."

Will looks up from his doodling. Hannibal is his current mentor, and Will kind of likes him. He's very steady with a great passion for how he trains and teaches Will, but he's also so controlled that Will rarely ever accidentally adopts him. Sometimes he ends up mimicking Hannibal's speech pattern, but every time he sees Jiaying he almost always morphs into her, so Hannibal is a welcome relief for Will to relax and no worry about accidentally becoming someone else.

"How was Reba?"

Will shrugs. "I liked her but . . . she's just not my mentor."

"You will find a true mentor in time. You just need to find someone with the right gift to match your remarkable one."

"So what's your gift then?" Will asks, curious and to curtail the inevitable blushing when Hannibal starts gushing about his empathic morphing abilities. He's learned that no one shuns the question, because there's so many of them no one can possibly remember every person's gift and everyone gets eager to show off what they can do. Will still has the scorch marks on his floor from the time one kid let off fireworks and Jiaying had showed up to drag him off, scolding him all the way.

"I was fortunate enough to be blessed with the ability to control every cell in my body," Hannibal replies.

" . . . Okay. That means?"

“It means, my dear Will, that no matter your fears of being consumed by your empathy, you could never become me. You could never lose yourself in me,” Hannibal says, as serious as Will’s ever heard him. “Let me show you the path.”

Will blinks. All of his mentors have made similar overtures, as it is up to the mentee to accept or reject a mentor until they find one they like, but no one’s made one as quite as personal or serious as Hannibal, and Will can read Hannibal’s sincerity like blaring neon signs in his maroon eyes.

“I thought you couldn’t be my mentor. Because you brought me before the council,” Will says slowly.

“Anyone can mentor anyone in Lai Shi. It is true that convention means that mentors are mostly elders, but our goal is to find the best possible match between teacher and student. My previous experience with you in no way removes me from candidacy.” Hannibal pauses, and this time he sets down the sketchpad he’d been drawing in and comes to kneel before where Will is sitting, grasping Will’s hands like a supplicant at an altar. “Your gift has the potential to be one of the most beautiful gifts among our people, Will. I can help you. Let me show you the path.”

Will finds himself blushing, and his fingers are already tingling with the tell-tale signs of beginning to morph as he absorbs Hannibal, but for the first time he takes a deep breath and manages to halt it, because Hannibal is right: Hannibal is so different yet so similar to Will that Will can easily tell where Hannibal ends and he begins, so even if he adopted Hannibal’s appearance and mannerisms, he would always remember who he was.

“Is that like your peoples’ mantra or something?” Will says, trying and failing to deflect from the bright redness he can feel in his cheeks. “Let me show you the path.”

“You,” Hannibal says, “you are my people, Will. You are one of us. I can show you that.”

Will looks at him, one of the most respected and oldest of the elders amongst their people, and thinks back to the first moment Will took the first step off the cliff. Thinks back to the wonder and adoration in Hannibal’s eyes, even then, thinks about how carefully and gently Hannibal has guided him in Afterlife, thinks about just how much Will wants in return to prove Hannibal right to the doubters on the council.

Thinks about taking one more step into the unknown.

“Okay,” Will manages to say. “Okay. Show me the path, Hannibal.”

Hannibal’s smile is a brilliant and terrible thing, wider than any smile he’s ever shown before, and his hands cradle Will’s head like it’s the most delicate, precious thing in existence. He kisses Will’s forehead like a blessing, and then Hannibal says, “Oh, Will. I will show you everything.”

FINIS

## Chapter End Notes

Join me tomorrow for Day 16: "Masquerade"! I will again be pulling my imagery from some lovely things victorine dug out of Google, and also I will finally make the joke I've been wanting to make ever since I learned that Mads's last name was Mikkelsen. And Will is going back to his stab-first, ask questions later self, because he was kinda fun to write.

I don't know if I'll return to the Hannigram section of this fic, but in a deleted scene I didn't have the time to fully flesh out, Reba/Francis definitely happened once Francis stopped crying about being a porcupine instead of a great dragon.

For all the powers I used in this ficlet:

- For those of you wondering what Jiaying could have done that was "far worse and far easier", Jiaying's power in the tv show was kinda like Rogue's from X-Men. So. Imagine that happening to our poor puppy Will.
- As for Reba, her power is based off of Gordon, whose power kinda looks like [this](#) and was really hard to describe soooo just look at that. :D
- Will is like Mystique from X-Men. I was sorta aiming for, he's now so empathetic that he feels everyone so strongly that he actually becomes like them physically as well. IDK how well that came across though
- Hannibal is based off of Apocalypse, again from X-Men. Since he controls all of his cells, he can mutate himself however he wishes, so for example if he doesn't want to sleep he can make his body so he doesn't have to and given all the shenanigans Hannibal gets up to I think we all agree he'd do exactly that if he had this power. And, yes it makes him overpowered compared to everyone else, but . . . . . let's be real, Hannibal is fscking overpowered even in the show

# Masquerade

## Chapter Summary

Will runs away from an arranged marriage and bumps into a man who introduces himself as Mads, son of Mikkell. Later on, Will finds out that the man is actually Hannibal Lecter, his future fiancé.

## Chapter Notes

Warnings: more implied smut, some violence cuz Hannibal is vengeful when you cross Will

Sooooo another loosely related story to the prompt. But I've been wanting to make the Mikkelsen joke for ages, damn it, so here it is. Also this was supposed to be based off of [this post](#) and IT GOT AWAY FROM ME I'M SORRY NOT SORRY.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Will thinks that the worst thing about the whole situation isn't the fact that no one told him ahead of time or that everyone acts like it's the most natural thing in the world or even that his life is essentially going to be over. No, the absolute worst thing about it is that everyone seems *happy* about it, from the maid who congratulates him to the councilor who beams and says it's the best thing they could have hoped for.

An arranged marriage is not anywhere *near* what Will would call "the best possible outcome" and his resentment grows with every single person who declares that he'll "understand it one day" until finally he breaks in the middle of dinner and goes storming from the hall, chucking his circlet at the guard who approaches and heading straight past the walls into the main gardens.

Once there, it's easy to avoid the guards. They haven't been able to keep with Will since he was a teenager. Will just picks one of the tallest trees and with his headstart he's halfway into the thickest branches before the guards get anywhere near.

The guards give up not long after, mostly because their armor would make it impossible to even think of looking up for Will and also because they assume the cooling winter nights will draw Will inside.

Will, defiantly, curls in on himself and sleeps.

He comes awake, groggy and confused, to the soft rasping sound of what Will's fairly certain is a knife and low murmuring in a strange language he doesn't understand. When he sits up, he about falls off his branch in surprise.

The man crouching peacefully next to him says nothing. The murmuring, Will realizes, is to the hawk that is perching, wings mantled, on the man's wrist. The rasping is the knife the man is using to peel a small apple in his hands, which he is alternatively slicing bits to eat and cutting off skin in pieces that he drops to the ground.

"Who are you?" Will says, hand on the dagger at his waist.

The man says something else in that strange language, and then throws his arm up, allowing the hawk to take out with a soft screech as it soars into the sky.

"Does your guard know that you prefer trees?"

Will eyes him warily. He's not getting any sense of danger from the man, who looks so relaxed one would think they were on the most comfortable bed instead of high up in a giant tree. He has shaggy brown hair dotted with spots of grey, but most of it is neatly braided out of his face. He has no identifying insignia on any of his clothes, but they're sturdy and well-made, the kind only good money can buy. And his voice is accented, as if he knows Will's language but is not entirely comfortable with it, so Will puts all of those pieces together and comes up with the most reasonable explanation.

"You're part of the Lithuanian delegation, aren't you?"

The man cuts another piece of apple. "What makes you say that?"

"No one dresses in furs like that around here."

The man tsks. "Perhaps they should. Then they would not be shivering as they perched in trees like your highness currently is."

Will flushes and curls up, bringing his knees closer to his chest in a bid for warmth. It's not an inaccurate jab, really, since winter is coming, but it's not quite as fierce here as it is in the far north where the Lithuanian kingdom rests, and so Will's never had to resort to furs to stay warm. Unfortunately, his current tunic isn't quite as thick as his other ones, hence the shivering.

"I didn't exactly run out with the intention of hiding forever. I don't really need furs for that."

"You hope, perhaps, that my prince will think you too delicate, like a flower consumed by frost, and reject the marriage, leaving you free to live as you have lived," the man says, in a disturbingly accurate summary of Will's most recent get-out-of-marriage plan. "I applaud the move, for feigning weakness to hide strength is a clever play, but I do not have high hopes for its success."

"I don't want your prince. I don't want any prince," Will explains, because the last thing he needs is to start yet another war.

“So you would plunge our countries back into war then?” the man asks, lowering his knife and looking at Will with such piercing eyes that Will has to avert his own. “You would declare war just to ensure your own short-lived happiness?”

“No! I just . . . I don’t know him. And yeah, maybe he’s great to you, but I’m . . . different.”

“Our prince is a great man,” the man says. “Perhaps you will have to change and adapt to life in our kingdom. But if you find the heart to try, perhaps you will find it not such a terrible fate after all, to be bound to our prince. He – ”

“If you stay one more word about how many battles he’s won, I will stab you.”

The man’s eyes crinkle, but Will can tell he doesn’t actually take Will’s threat seriously. The man regards him like Will regards the newborn castle kittens – cute, fluffy, and sometimes rather shrilly, but ultimately not at all dangerous, even by accident. Then, strangely, he shrugs out of his long fur cloak and offers it to Will, who takes it after the man gives every indication of climbing over and wrapping it around Will himself if he doesn’t accept it.

“I think you have some bravery and fire in you yet, Prince William,” the man says. “And I think that our prince will like you very much.”

Will snorts, but it’s difficult to be too crabby when he feels the warmth of the furs enclose his body, a welcome guard against the chilly night air. “Yeah, right,” Will retorts. “Because he hasn’t heard of the long list of people who’ve turned me down after a day with me.”

“I think our prince is rather intrigued by that, actually. I think he will find you rather special.”

There’s a soft screech, and then the hawk returns to land on the man’s shoulder, nibbling affectionately at his ear, and Will feels himself smile against his will. The man clearly treats his animals well, and Will can never hold too much of a grudge against someone who understands the value of well-treated pet.

“What’s your name?” Will asks, when the man stands with every indication he’s about to swing down.

The man gives him a look. “I am Mads, son of Mikkell,” he says. “Good night, Prince William.”

The furs smell like amber and spice and fresh spruce trees, and Will is still holding it when he finally climbs down and consents to being fretted over and groomed by his anxious retinue of guards and maids.

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To welcome the Lithuanian delegation, the undisputed winners of the war and whose prince will be making off with Will as a gesture of trust and alliance, the court throws an enormously elaborate masquerade ball.

To say Will is pleased by this is . . . well. Half and half. On one side, he has to endure being dressed up by his servants, so as to give an appropriate estimation of his station. On the other

side, he'll be wearing a mask pinned to his face with delicate yet strong pins, which means that he has many sharp weapons to stab partners who get too grabby and also that if he misbehaves a little, no one will care because everyone misbehaves as a masquerade.

Either way, Will enters late because it's rude to arrive after the prince and so he's almost always at least a minute late to allow for stragglers to arrive without making a fool of himself. The party is already in full swing, with many men and women twirling around in dance numbers, the ladies with masks adorned with feathers and jewels and the men holding eye masks on sticks that have neat inscriptions and filigree on the edges. No one looks his way, thankfully, so he proceeds to head straight for the main serving table where a few of the court's loyal hounds are waiting under the table, tails wagging. They're too well-trained to jump or steal food, but Will's also raised many of them himself and they'd barge out in an instant to defend him, so Will figures why not give them some scraps while he's at it.

Winston butts gently against his side, and Will greets him with some meat and a scratch on the head.

"Hey, boy," Will says. "Bet you love this. All the shiny things to look at and food to eat. Without having to worry about suitors asking you for dances."

Winston whines at him.

"Yeah, you've got the good life," Will sighs.

Will spends at least an hour there, eating food and drinking wine and petting whatever dog gets tired of lying down and wanders off for a scratch. Anyone who comes to request his hand he turns down, as politely as he knows how, and most are easily dissuaded his loyal pets at his side.

All except one, of course.

"Are you injured?"

"What?" Will asks, startled, as a man in a sweeping cloak, high-collared maroon shirt, and of all things an eyepatch on his right eye that in no way conceals his face at all.

The man smiles, just a hint of curved lips. "Were you injured by your sojourn amongst the trees, my prince?" he repeats.

Will looks away. "No. I just don't want to dance."

"Why is that?"

"I thought the point of a masquerade was to keep your identity a secret," Will fires back. "You seem determined to reveal my identity to everyone."

Mads laughs, not seeming bothered by the way several of the dogs go to check him out, butting against him and eventually seeming to decide he's not a threat to Will. "Oh, my prince, I imagine many know exactly who you are. Who else can afford gold stitching in their tunics?"

“You.”

“This? This is borrowed, I’m afraid. This is not the traditional dress of the Lithuanian court.”

Will gives him a side eye. “You came on diplomatic purposes for your prince, who is going to be my husband,” Will says slowly, “and you did not bring the proper attire for our court?”

Mads shrugs, like flicking a gnat off a plate, easy, simple, unthinking. “My people are warriors, my prince. Balls and court are not our forte. We are a practical people, and we dress for warmth rather than station. Gold stitching has little value to us, unless it were to significantly improve the durability of our clothing or treatment of our soldiers.”

“Well, then I hope your prince is ready to let me make a lot of clothes when I get there,” Will grumbles. “Even my plainest clothes are ridiculous next to you.”

“I imagine that our prince will find he is able to refuse you very little.”

“You know, where is your prince? No one’s pointed him out to be.”

“As you said,” Mads says slyly, “this is a masquerade, where all identities are hidden. What reason would I have to defeat that purpose by giving you the easy answers to all of your questions?”

“Wow, you’re cryptic.”

“Let me make a deal then.” Mads holds out a hand and gives an elegant, sweeping bow, the kind most servants make to the highest kings and queens, elaborate and showy. “I will tell you where your husband is, if you will agree to at least one dance with me.”

“Or I could just keep looking.”

“Masks make it harder to see men’s faces and the truth therein. Even for you.”

“And what does that mean?”

“Even in Lithuania, we have heard rumors about you,” Mads answers simply.

Will sighs, but he still places his hand in Mads’s outstretched one and bows back. It’s only polite, and more importantly, everything about Mads screams politeness and grace, so Will’s fairly certain that he will neither try and feel Will up or stomp all over his toes. Worst comes to worst, Mads refuses to uphold his end of the deal, and Will returns to feeding and petting his dogs.

The dance they start for is, luckily, not a very elaborate one. Simply a more intimate twirling of partners, each moving with a set little circle in a roundabout circle, like a clockwork of jewels and glittering clothing to make up the perfectly ticking clock that is the main court.

Will is gratified to find that his initial impressions were right. Mads leads with confidence and flair, so Will mainly closes his eyes and follows his signals, right and left and back and

forward, all around, as Mads keeps a careful hand on his waist and guides them gently through the swirls of other pairs.

“Do you dislike dancing so much, my prince?”

“No. But then when I dance, everyone stares at me,” Will mumbles.

Mads twirls him around, letting him spin out and then reeling him back in, at ease with his body in a way Will’s definitely envious of. “Good,” he says firmly, startling Will. “They should stare. For you are stunning beyond compare.”

“The deal was for a dance, not fishing for compliments.”

“I cannot compliment my future prince?”

“Absolutely not,” Will says, but he smiles as he says it, because he can feel the teasing in Mads’s tone as surely as he can see the amusement gleaming in his eyes. “First thing I will do is place a ban on any and all compliments that can be paid to me, no matter who says them.”

The musicians strike the final cord, and they part, gently, still holding hands for the final bow.

“Perhaps,” Mads says. “Perhaps.”

Someone nearby taps a glass, then another, until a ringing chorus of soft chimes ring out, and many people turn to the front as the councilors gather to start blasting their general accolades and pats on the back as they announce the alliance with Lithuania and the end of the war. Will claps politely along with everyone else, but mostly he rolls his eyes as they go on and on about the generosity and brilliance and abilities of the great Prince of Lithuania, Hannibal the VIII of the Lecter Dynasty. Even Mads cracks a mocking smile here and there as they go on and on, until they finally realize that they need their trading pawn to complete the self congratulations.

“Prince William!” comes the shrilling cry of one of the councilors. “Prince William!”

“Can I just stay here?” Will complains.

Mads laughs, but takes his hand all the same. “No, my prince, you cannot. We must all step into the spotlight when it is our turn.”

Will is too busy brooding to realize the significant of the plural pronouns Mads uses, which is probably why he’s so taken aback when the councilor beams at the sight of them and bows, exclaiming, “Oh, good, you found him, Your Majesty!”

Will says, quite elegantly, “What.”

Mads gives him a rueful smile as the councilor says, “Prince William, may I introduce you to your future husband, Prince Hannibal Lecter the VIII.”

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Will ignores Mads – Hannibal’s overtures through the next three days, smiling pleasantly but not speaking a word, and when the day comes for him to leave he finds himself too overcome with sorrow and regret to even bother looking to his future husband, instead spending his time giving ample and thorough good-byes to his beloved pets and dodging the anxious councilors who keep trying to push their agendas for him to carry all the way back to Lithuania. He continues ignoring Hannibal even as they leave the castle, Will ensconced sulking in a small carriage and Hannibal riding at his side on a beautiful black horse.

When they stop for dinner, though, Hannibal seems to think that he’s given Will enough space, because he comes straight inside bearing bribes.

“You will need better furs,” Hannibal says, eyeing him critically, “but for now this might do.”

Will takes it, wraps himself up, and continues to be a silent glaring burrito.

Hannibal sighs. “Are you still so angry, my prince?”

“Um, yes. You let me make a fool of myself in front of you! And you lied about your name, after spending so much time boasting about Lithuanian honesty.”

Hannibal holds up a hand. “I did not lie to you, my prince. No, truly,” he adds, when Will snorts. “The name ‘Hannibal Lecter’ is more of a title than a name. We elect our kings based on strength and the consensus of the generals among us, and whomsoever wins takes the name and the dynasty for their own. I was born Mads, son of Mikkell, and now that I am to be king, I am Hannibal Lecter the VIII of my name.”

“That’s . . . not how a dynasty works.”

Hannibal shrugs beneath his massive furs, eating into his dinner without seeming terribly bothered by Will’s skeptical tone. “In Lithuania, every man or woman must prove themselves worthy of their own accord. Their station rises or falls based on that, not the name of their sire or mother. I myself never knew my father.”

Will leans forward, interested despite himself. He’s heard rumors of kingdoms like this, who runs on war and merit and whose leaders claw their way to the top despite the odds instead of being handed everything on a silver platter. It would never work in Will’s kingdom, for there are too many people set in the old ways, but Will still always found it fascinating, how a war-driven society could somehow be more equal and communal than the lauded peace-driven ones.

“So why do you call yourself Mikkelsen?”

“For you,” Hannibal answers. “No other kingdom uses the surname style that we do, so we have adapted names for use when we trade or fight. In Lithuania, it is a meaningless name.”

“So . . . any child of ours?”

“In my country, they would be known as the firstborn of William and Mads. William and Hannibal, if I am still king.”

Will sighs. Maybe it's the fur cloak, maybe it's the way Hannibal bulldozes forward past every single wall Will's built, or maybe it's the warm supper, different yet surprisingly filling, that sits in Will's belly. Either way, he finds himself less and less angry with Hannibal for what is probably more like a cultural misunderstanding than a true lie.

Not that Hannibal won't lie, of course. Will can tell that Hannibal is as clever in swordplay as he is in wordplay, and Will knows Hannibal would do it with no regrets.

But not to him. Not to someone Hannibal wishes to make his equal.

Will extends a hand. "Maybe we should start over," he suggests. "Hi. I'm William of the Graham dynasty."

Hannibal's eyes crinkle, and something in his shoulders relax. He sets aside his bread and takes Will's hand, which instead of shaking he brings to his mouth for a gentle kiss. "Hello, my prince. I am Hannibal, the VIII of the Lecter dynasty."

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## Six Months Later

Will knows something is wrong when Hannibal comes back with eyes sharp as flint, hands clenched into fists and almost ripping his shirt off in his anger as he attempts to undress.

"Um . . . Should I have come with you to that meeting?" Will asks from where he's perched on their bed, shrouded in furs he stole from Hannibal's closet.

Hannibal looks at him and visibly relaxes, mostly because he finds it downright hilarious to see Will bundled up in furs. Normally Will attends war and council meetings with Hannibal, because he's addicted to learning more about Lithuania, but today he skipped out to help out with the kennels because the kennel master bought new dogs and was integrating them into the pack. Will's work with the dogs is welcomed in the Lithuanian court because it demonstrates his passion and commitment, so Hannibal encourages it whenever he can.

"I see you brought some of the shagginess back with you," Hannibal says, nodding at his furs.

Will yawns. "If you didn't want me to steal your furs, you would stop me."

Hannibal seems to take that as an invitation to come over and peel the furs off, kissing as he goes and laughing when Will squirms away and pinches him until they've rolled into a giant knot of furs and blankets, Hannibal a warm welcome weight on Will's back as he ceases the tickling and transitions into gentle strokes along Will's skin, because Hannibal is weirdly fascinated by the lack of scars on Will's back.

"Seriously, what's wrong?" Will asks drowsily.

Hannibal pauses a scant centimeter from Will's neck. "The Dragon has declared war. We begin marching tomorrow."

"What?! I thought the negotiations were going well!"

“They were. Until the Dragon burned one of my men at the stake for the crime of being an outsider at a festival,” Hannibal says, voice heavy with weariness.

Will groans and wriggles until Hannibal allows him to flip back over. “Just why.” He’s been enjoying this solitude with Hannibal in Lithuania, no visitors or councilors, just Hannibal and him learning the ways they fit together, working in the gardens and riding in the hills and swimming in the ice cold lakes (although to be fair, it was less swimming and more Hannibal skinny dipping and dragging Will in, laughing uproariously the entire way).

Hannibal nuzzles at his curls. “I will miss this time with you too. But I must go, and you must stay, and we will see each other again when I return.”

The traditional parting ritual is to ask for a war prize, such as an enemy’s head or treasure, as undisputable proof of a victory, but Will finds that he wants only one thing from Hannibal when it comes to war. He touches Hannibal’s chin and kisses him, delighting in the experience of Hannibal’s lips on his given that they rarely kiss and only recently started doing it.

“Come back to me,” Will says – demands.

“I will bring you the heads of every man and woman who seeks to keep me from you.”

“Hannibal.”

“I’ll make sure they do not bleed on you this time?”

“Hannibal.”

“And perhaps one of their dogs,” Hannibal says, kissing his way down Will’s chest. “Perhaps that is the way to your heart.”

“Hannibal,” Will says, but it’s less of a protest and more of an encouragement, mostly because Hannibal ducks his head down and decides to express his devotion to Will in ways other than words.

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Hannibal leaves early the next morning, parting with a solemn wave and his own crown resting heavily on Will’s head, declaring Will unquestioned regent in his absence.

It takes all of two hours for someone to contest that.

Which, to be fair, Will had expected. Any sign of weakness is challenged almost immediately, and many still regard Hannibal’s decision to broker for peace a husband instead of more land or gold as on without much sense. Will, who is still new to Lithuanian traditions and still walks around in furs, is regarded as less of an advantage and more of a weakness in Hannibal’s side for his opponents to poke their fingers at.

Will takes off his glove and throws at the feet of his accuser.

Abel, firstborn of Gideon and Louise, looks from the glove to Will and laughs, slapping his leg. “As if you could challenge me, little pup,” he smirks.

Will unlatches the fur cloak Hannibal had made especially for him, removes the crown carefully, and draws his sword. He’s used to fighting with a shield, but in these kinds of combat, the combatants enter with one weapon and one weapon only, or with fists alone if it is a fight to bleed and not to the death. For someone to question the right of the monarch though, it’s definitely a fight to the death.

“Then fight me, since you are too much of a coward to fight my mate,” Will says calmly, and he can see the way many consider his words, moving away from Hannibal’s weakness in choosing him and instead Abel’s choice to challenge only when Hannibal was away.

Abel scowls at him and unleashes his own sword. “I’ll greet Mikkelsen with your head. Perhaps that will finally make him smile.”

Will dodges the first strike, ducks under the second, and lands two precise cuts to the inside of Abel’s unarmored legs, causing the man to howl and wobble as if drunk. Will follows it up with a leaping climb up the man’s back, knocking away the man’s blade and rolling them both to the ground, where he proceeds to step on Abel’s wrist with crushing force and bring his hands to bear the exact way Hannibal once taught him, making Abel’s eyes bulge as he claws frantically for breath.

Will waits until Abel is half-gone, and then he stands and points his sword right against the man’s throat.

“Yield,” Will says simply.

Abel glares, so Will presses just a little harder, causing a tiny stream of red to join the dirt on the ground.

“I yield,” Abel rasps, because even here, survival is prized over pride.

“Good,” Will says cheerfully, sheathing his blade. “Then you can face my mate’s judgment when he returns and serve as witness when he wonders why the court records reflect a challenge to his rule only hours after his departure.”

The way Abel’s face drains of color as he’s dragged away by the guards makes it all worth it.

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Hannibal returns after only a week, triumphant, but for Will it’s an eternity, and as it happens, Hannibal finally crosses the castle gates, Will has taken shelter in the dog kennels, working out his rage and frustration and loneliness with the new puppies, who take to his commands with, sadly, more eagerness than any of the other generals of the court.

“So this is why you constantly smell of dog,” Hannibal comments.

Will jerks up from where he’s lying on the ground with most of the puppies piled onto him, snoring, and attempts frantically to get clear without stepping on anyone’s tail, which means

that Hannibal's worked his way up to one of the widest smiles Will's ever seen on his face by the time Will gets over to him.

"Um, hi."

"Hello, my prince. How – "

Will tackles him at that point, and they go down with a thud to the ground, Will breathless with joy at the familiar sense of Hannibal's arms snaking firmly around his waist and Hannibal breathless with laughter.

"I missed you," Will says, a minute later.

"So I see. I hear you defend my claim upon the throne."

"Oh, um, yeah."

"You did not kill him?"

"Figured I'd rather see his face when you made the call."

"Of course."

"So . . . enough talking?"

Hannibal agrees, of course, so Will's rather grateful that no one walks in on the sight of their king and consort furiously making love in the nearest stall that has fresh linens and no dogs. Either way, the telling smirks of the guards and passing generals when they walk back to their rooms still makes Will blush, even though Hannibal just puffs up with pride and beams, practically swaggering around with his face buried in Will's neck until they're safely in their quarters and Hannibal has their clothes off and them on the bed in three seconds flat.

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The next day, Hannibal calls Abel from the dungeons, and the man stands bravely, though still pale-faced, before Hannibal's expressionless face. Will, from where he's comfortably ensconced against Hannibal's side, merely smirks.

"You challenged me in my mate's stead," Hannibal opens.

Abel shakes his head, sharp and quick. "No, I challenged the right of your mate to rule in your stead," he argues.

Hannibal hums dismissively. "To challenge my mate is to challenge me," he replies. "Such it is written in the laws of our people. Will was well within his rights to take your head off himself for your disrespect. But he has a gentler heart, which I imagine you and your kin should be grateful for."

Abel says nothing at that.

Hannibal stands, unsheathing his blade and to Will's admittedly biased eyes he looks no greater than a king than he does in this moment, solemn and furious and a leader in every way. "Let it be known that Will Graham and I ascended this throne as equals," Hannibal declares, voice ringing through the silent hall. "He is mine and I am his, and we are one. To challenge one of us is to challenge the other. And for you, Abel, firstborn of Gideon and Louise, you have challenged, and you have lost and although my mate chose against extracting a price, I will not be so lenient."

The doctors take Abel, cursing and spitting, after Hannibal takes his dominant leg as his price, and Will reconfigures his brain. *This* is the most kinglike he's ever seen Hannibal, flushed with pride and passion and with blood dripping from his sword, eyes fierce as he strides to Will and lifts him to his feet with a burning kiss.

"I bring to you my spoils of war," Hannibal says.

"You got blood on me. Again."

"Your smile says otherwise. I imagine – "

"I love you," Will blurts out, and Hannibal freezes, but Will doesn't take it back. They've moved at a glacial pace since they met, yet now when Will looks at Hannibal he sees no deception, no doubts, no confusion. Hannibal chose him and Hannibal loves him, and Will loves him back, for his cruelty and his kindness and his bewilderment at Will's love for dogs and his tendency to snore and the way he turns every sparring session into a worship-Will-time and the way he always lets Will steal his furs and the way he cuddles Will in sleep and the way he soaps Will's hair when they bathe. He loves all of Hannibal, unreservedly, and he wants Hannibal to know, because sometimes words mean more than actions.

"I love you too," Hannibal says, soft voice suffused with joy, "to the end of our days and beyond."

"To the end of our days," Will echoes, "and beyond."

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### **Deleted Scene I Ran Out of Fscks to Give In Terms Of Where It Fit In The Story**

When Will feels a sudden pair of hands descend on his shoulders, he yelps and flails so hard he gives Hannibal an unexpected introduction to the bath.

"Hannibal!"

"Yes, my prince?"

"I'm naked!"

Hannibal just looks at him, one eyebrow raised, and Will looks away quickly, cheeks flaming, when he realizes that Hannibal is also naked, bare from toes to head, all of his muscles and tattoos on display.

“You have never seen another man before, my prince? Do you imagine Lithuanians quite so different from you?”

“Go away, Hannibal, and let me enjoy my bath.”

“It would be a shame to waste the hot water,” Hannibal muses thoughtfully, and then he *climbs in the bath right next to Will*.

“Hannibal!”

“Lean forward,” Hannibal says, unconcerned. “There.”

Will shivers, painfully shy and cold despite the warm water, as Hannibal closes his arms and legs around Will’s with a restful sigh. It’s not like he thinks Hannibal will hurt him, but honestly he hasn’t even seen the man’s ankles and now he can’t stop staring at the bare expanse of Hannibal’s leg.

Thankfully, Hannibal seems uninterested in anything but actually bathing, and Will relaxes gradually as Hannibal lathers a rag and washes him carefully, hands gentle despite the crushing power Will knows they can unleash, massaging his legs and back and hair gently until Will is practically a limp, boneless pile of skin and bones against Hannibal’s chest, eyes closed and head lolling in the heat and comfort of his husband’s embrace.

“Such a fierce one you think yourself to be, my prince,” Hannibal murmurs, “even against those who would not harm you.”

“Ugh, no more analyzing, please.”

“As you wish,” Hannibal says, amused, and gathers one last cup of water to pour over Will’s curls. “You’re finished, my prince.”

Will takes that as his cue to depart, and he flees to the safety of their warm bed with its furs, pulling on the first shirt he finds, which when he lies down and starts to doze turns out to be Hannibal’s, smelling richly of pine and musk and the spices Hannibal enjoys tending, but Will finds too comforting to bother changing, so when Hannibal emerges, toweling off his own hair, he finds Will lounging in their bed, yawning with his eyes at half mast.

“And you insist that I cease to write odes to you,” Hannibal says.

“And sketching, I found those too.”

Hannibal’s eyes gleam, and Will pointedly refrains from commenting on how disturbing anatomically accurate they were or how unrealistic they were. He’s never posed like that in his life, partly because he’s not sure he’s not flexible and because it’s too cold to pose like that without shivering from the lack of clothes.

“Are you braiding your hair?” Will asks after a moment, when he wakes up enough to determine why his heat-radiating husband hasn’t come to bed.

“Did you imagine me incapable of such a feat?”

“No, but I thought . . . someone else did them.”

“Is that an invitation to drag you to the warfront merely to braid the hair I cannot reach?” Hannibal teases, fingers neatly and quickly producing braids to hold the hair out of his face. “Or is that an invitation to teach you how?”

“I can braid!”

“Your hair is not that long, my prince.”

Will propels himself upwards, scowling like the kitten Hannibal teases him to be, and bats Hannibal’s hands away. “Fine, then, let me prove it.”

Hannibal’s hair is warm and silky to the touch, and Will finds that their breathing falls into sync as he braids across Hannibal’s head. It’s routine, comforting, almost the same way he remembers when he used to braid the hair of what few friends he had as a child, back before he learned that such behavior was below the dignity of a prince, and when he’s finished, Will almost regrets being finished.

Hannibal clasps his hand before he can draw it away, and he examines Will’s handiwork with careful eyes.

“Thank you, my prince,” Hannibal says softly.

Later that night, Will surveys his husband, who sleeps peacefully on his back, chest rising and falling in a gentle rhythm. For all the viciousness Will’s heard and seen of Hannibal on the battlefield, Hannibal’s been nothing but kind and courteous to him, if prone to some rather targeted ribbing whenever Will has a bad day.

*Maybe I could learn to love you, Will thinks. One day.*

The next morning, when he wakes up to find himself once again enfolded in Hannibal’s warm embrace, he merely closes his eyes and back to sleep instead of wriggling free.

FINIS

## Chapter End Notes

Tomorrow is Day 17: "Haunted House"! The story is going to be about as related to Haunted House as my Haunted Mansion fic. Apologies in advance.

Also, sorry for the deleted scene thing. I just rant out of time and fscks to give about where it went but I wanted to write it. It happens sometime before the Six Months Later thing.

Lastly, originally this was gonna involve clean-shaven Hannibal, and then we watched "King Arthur" in the Cannibal Cinema, and he just morphed in the apple-eating, braid-wearing, hawk-talking Tristan. My bad.

# Haunted House

## Chapter Summary

Will is the only witness to the most prolific serial killer of all time, the Chesapeake Ripper. Too bad he seems to admire him more than he seems to fear him.

## Chapter Notes

Warnings: descriptions of really gross murder scenes, plus a big age difference (25-30 years) between Hannibal and Will if that's not your thing

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

To say that Jack Crawford is excited would . . . mostly be wrong. He's not particularly enthused at the prospect of having to knock on yet another family's door and telling grieving parents that their only child has been horribly murdered. He's not particularly enthralled at the idea of staring at these crime scene photos over and over again as they become part of the long, long bible of Ripper kills. And he's not at all happy to be dealing with the incredibly anxious and overbearing owners of this particular establishment.

This is because the Chesapeake Ripper chose to make his first kill in his three-victim pattern in, of all things, a haunted house.

Now, with all the lights switched on and all the fake blood cleaned away from the real blood and all the mirrors carefully covered, the haunted house is still incredibly creepy, but that's mostly because of the mutilated corpse of young man, eyes wide in sightless horror, mouth agape in a frozen scream, most of his skin carved from his flesh and his guts spilling to the floor, that lays in the final exhibit.

Still. Jack Crawford can find excitement in one thing.

For the first time, the Chesapeake Ripper left behind a witness. A *conscious* witness.

His name is Will Graham, and he's going to be Jack's key to finding the greatest serial killer in America. If, you know, he would actually make talk. Or even make eye contact.

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"Will," Jack repeats for the fifth time, trying to get the young man's attention. His glasses are splattered with blood, but his eyes are zoned off, into the distance, and the medics have long

since wandered away, since Will was found carefully tied up and gagged in the same room as the victim, but so carefully bound that he doesn't even have bruises.

Finally, Graham comes back to earth, and he even startles when he realizes how close Jack is to him.

"Who are you? Where am I? What – What's going on?"

"You're in Baltimore, Virginia," Jack says, and checks his watch. "It's 10:00 PM at night, and your name is Will Graham. I need you to listen very carefully to me."

"I know who I am," Will snaps, clutching at the shock blanket like an anchor in a deep ocean. "Who are you?"

Jack brushes off the rudeness. He's just seen a man brutally murdered in front of him, after all. "My name is Jack Crawford, and I'm a special agent with the FBI. We're here because we found a young man murdered in this haunted house. Now, I need you to think back very carefully: did you see the person who killed him?"

Will huffs. "Of course I did. These glasses aren't just for show."

Jack takes a deep breath. Closes his eyes. Thanks a God he barely believes him. A witness who was conscious and remembers. It's like a miracle. "Do you think you could pick him out from a crowd or describe him to a sketch artist?"

"No," Will says. "But I can tell you his modus operandi. I can tell you his profile. And I can tell you why."

Jack barely contains a snort of disbelief. The kid's maybe 19, 20 years old at most. "I have a profile already drawn up."

"And it's done such a great job of catching you the Ripper, has it?"

Jack takes the kid back to headquarters.

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"So, kid," Jack says, arms crossed, "impress me."

Will hums and walks slowly around the body, eyes keen and not at all seemingly bothered by the gruesome scene. He has, at least, the stomach of an FBI agent, if not the attitude. "This man was a bully. He prided himself on power – or at least, illusions of power. The Ripper stripped those illusions away, literally in the case of skin, and then left him for all to see what he truly was: just a man of flesh and bone, surrounding himself in masks and mirrors and thinking himself a great monster when in fact he was nothing." Will pauses and looks up. "Don't bother searching for school acquaintances or enemies or even friends. The person who did this had maybe one or two encounters with his killer, and probably didn't even know his name."

"That's standard practice."

“It won’t get you anywhere. The Ripper knew this man, but this man didn’t know him.”

“And what makes you think that?”

“He begged,” Will says simply. “He begged and begged and begged, and the Ripper merely hummed and sliced. If he truly knew who the Ripper was, he would not have begged for mercy from someone he knew would not grant it.”

Jack lowers his arms, stunned. He had thought that Will had heard the kill or been nearby, to have been close enough to hear such detail. . . “Did you see it? All of it?”

“Of course,” Will says. “The Ripper wanted an audience. Don’t all killers?”

---

They put Will Graham in the witness protection program, much to his displeasure and protests, but the higher-ups are firm. He is the only surviving witness to have seen the Ripper work and escape unscathed, since most other living victims are comatose or otherwise incapable of ever identifying the killer.

Jack moves the kid from randomly picked hotels in random cities every other week, causing more complaints, but at least it means he can’t go out and get in too much trouble. In between moves, he picks the kid’s brain.

“Why’d he let you live?” he asks once, as they drive to a new city, Will sulking.

He’s found that asking questions and indicating he’ll listen to the answers usually draws Will out. Getting treated seriously is a major temptation for the kid, which says some not so great things about his upbringing that have caused Jack to pull some strings and get the kid’s background looked into. Normal kids aren’t so calm about being the only surviving witness to a feared serial killer.

“The Ripper wants an audience. Or a friend.”

Jack regrets asking the questions soon enough.

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The second victim comes about a month and a half later. A woman is found strangled in a field, with her perfectly carved out heart in her proffered hands, her lungs artfully splayed around her kneeling legs, and, most intriguing of all, half of her brain in her mouth, spooned out of her cratered skull.

Several officers vomit. Will merely cocks his head.

“What could make someone do something like this to someone else?” someone asks, revolted. “What’s so wrong with him?”

“No one made the Chesapeake Ripper like this,” Will retorts absently, as if he’s barely paying attention, staring at the corpse like it holds all of the answers to existence. “He made himself.”

“You sound like you admire him.”

“He’s an artist,” Will says. “Just one most people can’t stomach.”

“Can you?”

Will smiles, dark and slow. “I believe the saying goes, you are what you eat.” And with that cryptic saying, he trots off to tell the team everything they’re doing wrong and the symbolism for the way the corpse was posed, while Jack stares at his trump card in dismay, as he seems more enamored of the man who might kill him than afraid.

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Jack gets the background results back. Will Graham is a state orphan, abandoned by his mother, left alone by his father who died a drunk, and tossed about from group home to group home after too many foster families passed on his “weirdness.” He put himself through school, taught himself the skills necessary to secure odd jobs fixing boat motors and such, and even managed to squeeze into community college classes by the strength of will alone.

Will Graham, Jack realizes, also made himself.

By the time he makes the call to the agent who happens to be in charge of guarding Will, it’s already too late.

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Will is panting, blood dripping down his throat and front in an endless fountain, as the shocked FBI agent dies with a gurgle, falling with a splat away from Will, who choked him with the same handcuffs the agent used to restrain Will to anything nearby and even denied him bathroom privileges for fear that he “looked like he might run” before he leaped onto his back and ripped out the man’s throat with his teeth.

He licks at his lips and smiles. The Ripper had been right. Even the shortest kill brings the highest of highs, to prove oneself an alpha over lesser sheep.

“Why, you little savage,” comes a low, amused voice from the darkness of the back door to the motel room.

“You disapprove?” Will asks, not bothering to turn around.

There’s a faint whisper of plastic over cloth as the Chesapeake Ripper steps quietly into the room, soft as a cat, and even Will, who’s straining with all of his senses, can barely hear him move. “A tad messier than I would have liked,” the Ripper admits, “but I suppose that only a messy scene would suit a messy boy like yourself.”

“He was rude,” Will murmurs. “I saved him a slow death from you.”

“You think this a gesture of mercy?”

“No such thing exists. We create it, somewhere from the depths of the most primal parts of ourselves.”

“Then we create murder too,” the Ripper comments, his voice growing louder as he comes closer. “We create murder and mercy in turns, as we desire, as we move, as we breathe.”

“No, no, no,” Will says. “We don’t create murder. We just murder. You – You create murder. You create art.”

“Such flattery,” the Ripper says, and suddenly he’s right behind Will, arms darting forward to pull Will close as hands tilt his chin back and forth under the flickering lights, admiring the play of the faint moon on the blood that still stains Will’s front.

Will looks into the eyes of the man who’d knocked him out instead of killing him, who’d slowly and carefully explained every single slice and move he made, who had left Will pining and alone in the dark, vanishing into the shadows. Will looks into the eyes of the Chesapeake Ripper, and sees a doctor, a killer, a psychiatrist, a mentor, a loner, a friend.

“You said you’d teach me. If I could find you,” Will tries.

“Did I?”

“If you didn’t want to, I’d be dead. And you’d eat my brain and fry my heart, just like you said you wanted to.”

The Chesapeake Ripper laughs at that. “Oh, my Will,” he says. “You little savage, messy, flattering boy. I am going to teach you *everything*.”

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When the FBI arrives, their agent is long since dead, his throat so badly sliced up that the forensics team is surprised that his head is still attached to his body. Will Graham is nowhere to be found, but there’s a long trail of blood leading from a pair of broken handcuffs dangling from the bed frame to the parking lot. They find an abandoned Bentley registered to FBI consultant Hannibal Lecter – who the FBI had sent to evaluate the mental stability of their newest star witness – in a ditch nearby, with the seats splattered with both of their blood mixed together, a lot of it, and so Will Graham and Hannibal Lecter become the newest names to join a long line of Ripper kills.

Jack isn’t so convinced. He is overruled.

In a first class section of a plane heading for Florence, a stewardess offers drinks to the flyers. One man, dressed in a perfectly groomed suit and with an impeccable mastery of Italian, orders some champagne for himself, but, despite the whines of his young companion, orders only juice for him. Later on, she will pass by after many passengers have succumbed to sleep, and find herself smiling at the sight of the gentleman carefully petting the curls of the young companion who is slumbering across his lap, adjusting the blanket delicately across his form and soothing his sleep twitches, a fond and protective look in his eyes, like a wolf guarding a pup, and her care in avoiding waking the young one when she whispers to the gentleman earns her an appreciative smile and a large tip. She walks away pleased and none the wiser that she just spent five minutes “aww”-ing over two people who will become the most fearsome killers in all of Europe.

FINIS

## Chapter End Notes

Join me tomorrow for Day 18: "Zombies"! Originally my idea was gonna be somewhat cracky, gonna be honest, but then whoops a plot fell in it. Plus a book series I adored. Um. See you then?

Also, what, a one word throwaway reference totally counts for connecting this story idea to the prompt. . . :D And yes, dialogue blatantly stolen and repurposed from the show.

# Zombies

## Chapter Summary

"They are trying to rename the Dead 'zombies' now, I believe," Hannibal says nonchalantly, like Will hasn't spent his entire life training to fight the Dead.

## Chapter Notes

Warnings: implied sex with an otherworldly being? Not sure if that's a real tag, but it is now I guess

Also: This story will be told in non-chronological order. I've never written this kind of format before, so if it really sucks, my apologies, but I wanted to try. If you would like to read it in normal order, I plan to post it somewhere else on like Tumblr or something eventually. Or if you can't wait, the true order is something like: Astarael, Saraneth, Mosrael, Belgaer, Ranna, Dyrin, Kibeth.

Oh yeah, and the book series this is based off of is (if the section titles didn't give it away) is the Old Kingdom Abhorsen trilogy by Garth Nix. All you really need to know that is death in the Old Kingdom isn't like a one-way trip; you can come back and reanimate corpses, and Abhorsens are the necromancers charged with sending the Dead back to Death and keeping the peace. At the beginning of time this evil spirit named Orannis tried to destroy everything and Seven Bright Shiners (kinda like the first gods) stopped Orannis and then bound themselves to the Charter marks/magic and significant bloodlines like the Abhorsen bloodline because what else can all-powerful gods do when they're bored?

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

### **Ranna – The Sleeper**

Will is sound asleep when Hannibal returns, slipping through the door as silent as a ghost despite his enormous crown of antlers and large form. He sleeps surrounded by the four burning Chartermarks for the four cardinal directions, a diamond protection spell of such strength that it would burn all who came into contact wishing the young Abhorsen-in-training ill, as well as his spelled sword and carefully arrayed length of Abhorsen bells.

Hannibal is no mere mortal though, and he walks through without flinching.

He settles by his young charge, folding his great bulk around the slender form, and rests his head close to Will's. Even in sleep, the Free Magic in Will calls out for the Free Magic in Hannibal.

Hannibal hums, low and reverent, and if anyone was listening, they might be surprised at the song the stag was singing, but in due time Will awakens, sitting upright with a gasp, eyes blank and burning with a crackling and shining inner light.

After a long moment, the light remembers how to speak and move, and Will speaks. "Why have you called for me, Belgaer?" the Shiner says.

Unable to help himself, the stag presses his nose to Will's forehead. "Dyrim," he says, and there is relief buried deep in the depths of his ancient voice. "I believed you lost to the spells of the Charter."

"We were all lost to the Charter, except Yrael," Dyrim says through Will's mouth. "It is only since the second binding of Orannis that some parts of us walk free again."

Hannibal snorts. "Asatarael and Mosrael have always walked free. Their bloodlines are strong in those wandering seers and the Dead-binders. But you, my darling, you chose to dissolve yourself in mortar and stone, and cast yourself a bastion against the many Dead would who seek to wander south of the Wall, far behind the reach of the Charter."

Slowly, the Shiner raises Will's hand, clumsily and jerkily, until it can cup the side of Hannibal's great head. "I cast us both as bastions against the Dead," Dyrim says quietly. "Have you forgiven me yet?"

The great Ravenstag does not answer.

Instead, he says, "Why did you choose reincarnation in this weak mortal form? Yrael and Astarael and I all walk free, in forms of our choosing."

Will's mouth twists into a parody of a smile. "I have always been fond of humans. You knew this. I wanted a life where I could look down upon them and not remember all that I had lost."

"All that *we* had lost. Do you imagine my memory anymore lacking in this animal form?"

"Your memory was always unrivaled, even amongst the nine of us."

There is silence.

Then: "Return to your slumber," Hannibal says. "I will guard you as I did in ages past, even in this wretched human form that you have chosen."

"I forgive you, Belgaer," Dyrim whispers, faint and soft as the sweetest, quietest bell. "Will you forgive me?"

The light fades, and Will slumps back down, with the great stag easing him back into a more natural form. Gently, he begins to nuzzle his young charge, curving himself ever more around

him. If anyone were to have been listening, they would heard nothing but singing, and seen nothing but a stag speaking to the form of a young man, and they would have thought nothing of it. All Abhorsens have a reputation for being strange, and sometimes, having even stranger companions.

Finally, the stag lays his great head to the ground again. He says, “I forgive you.”

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### **Mosrael – The Waker**

The voices of the greatest of the Nine Bright Shiners rise together in a burning cacophony, eight against one, a twisted lyrical song of life and memory and love against the rising scream of hatred and destruction and a never ending hunger.

When it is over and the world is saved, Sabriel frees the ancient one, Yrael, from his imprisonment, but the Bells remember anew, and Yrael is not the only one who wakes.

Far away in the ice and snow, Mosrael breathes again, and the Nine Day Watch celebrates the largest awakening of Clayr sisters in the entire history, a full twenty-and-nine of girls and women who join their Sight sisters. In the depths of the well of the ancient house of the guardians of the dead, Astarael breathes again, and the tunnels fill with the smell of amaranth and rosemary. In the cold waters of Death, Kibeth breathes again, and strengthens anew for striding amongst the water until someone calls again for service. In the heart of a young prince, Saraneth breathes again, the broken line of Wallmakers remade with the forging of a golden hand. In the depths of a deep, dark basement, under lock and key and spell, Ranna breathes again, and the sorcerer Kerrigor settles into an ever deeper sleep, caught forever in the sweet tones of the Sleeper.

By the Great Wall, Dyrin emerges with a sigh from concrete and mortar and dissolves into wind, drifting about through time and space until it finds a new home in a squalling baby boy, newly born south of the Wall.

Belgaer emerges on the other side of the Great Wall, a monstrous form of darkness and red, growling and pacing, and for anyone unaware, they might mistake that form for one of the Dead. Eventually, it is captured into a wooden scrap, carefully tucked away and forgotten, but never quite bound.

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### **Kibeth – The Walker**

The Abhorsen of old used to travel the country on foot, corralling the Dead and bringing peace to the living. More recent Abhorsen tended to use Paperwings, elegantly folded flying machines of paper, crafted with skill and love and Charter Magic bound deep into their bones. Will, though. Will rides Hannibal.

At first, he had been reluctant, when the great Ravenstag had bowed one leg, his glorious crown of antlers tilted in invitation and his two great black raven wings unfolding like a pure black flower.

“Isn’t that . . . I don’t know, dishonoring? To ride one such as you?”

Hannibal had merely laughed. “Does it dishonor the wind to ride the current with a Paperwing, young one? I choose to let you ride, and if one day I choose to stop, I will let you fall from my back with nary a second glance.”

“That’s not very encouraging,” Will had said, but he’d grabbed one of Hannibal’s antlers and hoisted himself up.

“It matters not,” Hannibal had replied. “I can walk a far great distance than you ever could.”

And it is true. Each mighty stride of the Ravenstag eats up the earth far more than Will ever could on horseback or by foot.

Nowadays, when the guard calls, Will springs onto Hannibal’s back with great ease and no hesitation, causing many to fall back and scream as the Ravenstag plunges across the road, taking off into the sky with a mighty sweep of black wings, bellowing into the sky. When Will lands amid the chaos, some of the Dead flee before him as Hannibal charges, wings stirring up fierce winds and teeth snapping at Dead corpses as his hooves stomp a fearsome rhythm into the ground.

Will dismounts immediately and gets to work, and at the end of the day, the village is saved with only a few casualties.

They speak grateful words to the Abhorsen and offer food and shelter, but Will turns it all down. Hannibal usually takes an offering or two, even though he does not need to eat, but he always ensures that Will finds somewhere warm and safe to rest for the night, so Will departs the admiring villagers aboard Hannibal as tales spread through the land of the Abhorsen who flies with a great beast of legend and ferocity.

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## **Dyrim – The Speaker**

Will is defiantly silent, even though Hannibal can see the subtle signs of pain as he carefully stitches the bullet wound in the Abhorsen-in-training’s shoulder.

“Speak your mind, Will.”

Will remains silent.

Hannibal sighs. Sometimes his Will is the most stubborn creature in all of existence. He honestly would not have it any other way.

“I hear that some delegations south of the Wall are championing to rename the Dead,” Hannibal says nonchalantly. “I believe that they wish to call them ‘zombies’ now. I am not sure what driving the renaming, but I am sure it some inane human desire to make the monsters in the dark more palatable, even though they should by all rights be more scared, what with their dismantling of the river pipes above the city. I think –”

“Stop squeezing it so hard,” Will grits out.

“Ah, so you have not lost your tongue.” Hannibal moves on to another section, careful and precise as always. “Relax, William. It is but a small wound, and easily fixed.”

“Yes,” Will complains, “which means that now *both* holes hurt.”

Hannibal says nothing, but the amused curl of his lips give him away, as does the way he leans forward to kiss the wound, causing Will to sigh as Free Magic passes from Hannibal to Will, relieving golden spells sliding gently beneath the skin to bolster healing and hold back infection.

“If that is your only complaint, I daresay it is now solved.”

Will grabs Hannibal’s hand before he can rise away. “It’s not.”

“I know.”

“Why do you persist in refusing to show your other form?” Will asks, clinging tight. “No weapon we have could possibly hurt you.”

Hannibal tilts his head, and for the most part, Will knows exactly what he is going to say. Even in this form, the form that looks vaguely humanoid, Hannibal is still distinctly Other. He has great black antlers, like in his ravenstag form, and wings that can swallow an entire room upon his back. He is so tall that he has to kneel or bump against the ceiling, and his hands are more akin to the claws of a great animal. Will loves him in this form and any other, but Hannibal transforms immediately whenever anyone gets close.

“To you,” Hannibal finally says, “I am but a companion, a friend you have known and trusted from childhood. To anyone else, I am a monster, if not one of the Dead than something just as terrible. And I would not be parted from you, Will, not even for the smallest second.”

“You haven’t ever even hurt anyone. Not even me. And it’s not like you were gentle.”

“Perhaps. But I am Free Magic in all its forms. You were too blinded by ecstasy to notice any of the number of spells I pressed into your skin as I took you.”

“Eight,” Will says firmly, causing Hannibal to blink. “I counted. The rest were blessings and prayers and . . . my grasp of the ancient Charter Marks isn’t that strong, I admit, but they were not made with ill intent.”

“This discussion is over,” Hannibal says instead, and before Will can stop him he leans down and touches the floor as a great ravenstag again, shaking his fur and settling primly next to Will’s bed to sleep. Will scowls, but eventually gives up and falls asleep, curled close to Hannibal’s fur and feathers, warm and wonderful and so ridiculously human.

Hannibal does not say that the reason Will failed to recognize the last blessings were because they were marks that came before the great Charter, the first attempts to condense all that was love into signs and characters. Hannibal does not think they succeeded, but he finds no harm in sinking his Free Magic deep into Will’s bones, so deep that the human practically glows of magic – and of Hannibal.

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## Belgaer – The Thinker

Once there was a young boy whose father was a trader. He came often to the glaciers of the Clayr, bringing fish and meat and cloth, items for which he was well-rewarded. But the journey was treacherous, and one year the father slipped and fell, perishing in an instant, and the boy was left with sisters who had no bother and paid more attention to the future than the present.

Luckily, the boy had a place in that future.

The Clayr fed and housed the boy, taught him magic and writing and math, and raised him among the other children. He was never allowed into the most sacred of places, where only the true Clayr were allowed, but in all else he had essentially free reign to wander.

On one such wandering, he comes across a scrap of wood bound in a soft cloth, and unravels a beautiful carving of a great ravenstag, legs raised and wings spread, bellowing with defiance, and it bespells him so much he leaves with it tucked under his shirt, sneaking it out of the depths of the Library into his chambers.

The Clayr know, of course. They see all. But all they do is to hand him a book on Charter Magic.

The boy studies and practices and reads, and one quiet morning, he takes a deep breath, lights the candles, casts the marks, sets the stag down, and prepares. He begins with a soft song, gentle and light, the way he would want his guardian to be, but soon the spell twists out of his control, and a fierce inner light shines through his hands and mouth as glowing, incandescent marks fly from his lips to the stag, which beams so brightly that the boy finds himself blinded but unable to stop singing, more and more and more until finally he collapses, drained and parched and panting, onto the cold floor.

When he lifts his head, he finds a great hulking ravenstag before him, eyes mad with anger, who charges and traps him beneath strong legs.

“What have you done, human?” bellows the stag.

“I – I thought – ”

“Humans!” scoffs the stag. “Always thinking they know better than they truly are. You know *nothing*, human. You are but the dirt beneath my hooves, and I will grind you into the earth until you perish of agony, caught between the sun and the river of Death.”

The boy, miraculously, finds the strength to shout back. “Well it won’t be any different than I am now! They all hate me! I’m nothing and no one and all I wanted was a friend!”

The stag backs off, feathers settling into place as its eyes grow softer, gentler. Not kinder, not by any measure, for no Free Magic is kind, but less likely to kill immediately. Even Others can be tempted by something new.

“What is your name, child?” the stag asks.

“Will,” the boy says. “Will Graham. I don’t . . . I don’t know what you are.”

The stag hums. “More and less than what you set out to make me,” it says with a shake of its great head, unfolding his wings and nosing at the feathers.

“Which is?”

“More and less than what you set out to make me.”

After several repetitions and finding that he makes no progress, the boy says, “I think you need a name.”

“Thinking,” the stag says sarcastically. “How unique.”

“You’re so graceful,” the boy notes, as the stag turns in what is really quite a small room seemingly without ease. “May I call you Hannibal?”

“What reason have I for a name?”

“You want to be called Stag from now on?”

The stag snorts. “Very well. You may call me Hannibal.”

“It means graceful,” the boy says quietly.

From then on, Hannibal the ravenstag and Will Graham the outsider become inseparable, even if for a long time, Hannibal vanishes the second any Clayr comes nearby and many believe the stag to be a figment of the boy’s imagination.

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## **Saraneth – The Binder**

When the battle is one, the Seven stand alone, quiet and downcast. They bind the Eight, yowling and scratching, to serve the Weeper, and he resolves into the form of a small white cat, harmless and contained, as the Weeper departs.

The Walker dissipates with a sigh, as Mosrael pours herself into a new bloodline, and the others begin laying the foundation for a new wall.

Belgaer eyes the proceedings with disgust. “As if the humans will be able to contain themselves,” it comments. “They are naught but forgettable creatures. Soon this wall will crumble, and the Dead will march anew.”

Dyrim watches with interest. “I am not so sure. If one of us were bound into the Wall, it would hold for many millennia to come,” it says.

“That is insane, even for your devotion to these little creatures,” Belgaer says. “Find a new project to focus on. This Wall will stand or fall without our help. It is the humans’ turn to play guardians amongst themselves, as Mosrael and Astarael have seen to. There are already three bloodlines from our get; we need not add cement and mortar to our list.”

But Dyrim does not forget, and the Wall is broken and rebuilt many, many times, until at least Belgaer stirs itself enough to interfere, assisting in the slaying of a great red dragon determined to open the biggest gateway to the river Death in many lifetimes. Between two of great Bright Shiners, it is childplay, and a human descendant of Astarael and Saraneth walks the remnants of the screeching dead through the nine Gates as the others begin to pick up the pieces and rebuild again.

Belgaer goes to find Dyrim, and finds it standing on the cliffside, where the newest section of the wall is being constructed.

“I do not understand why you persist on fighting for these little children,” Belgaer says. “They are skin and bone and blood, and fleeting as the spark of a candle.”

“But they are beautiful,” Dyrim says. “Beautiful as the moon and the blood and the sea.”

“It looks all like one and black in color to me,” Belgaer says.

“I hear that you are taking up Orannis’s place of whispering in the ears of humans for our own amusement,” Dyrim says abruptly.

“And I hear that you are still guarding them, despite we all making the ultimate sacrifice in their name,” Belgaer says. “What are a few humans here and there, after all we have given to save their world?”

“You will stop.”

“And how will you bring about that, Dyrim?”

What happens next is remembered by no human descendant, but either way, two shining forms plunge from the clifftops to the sea below, extinguishing with naught but a sigh and the smell of sea salt and an eye-searing flash of crackling incandescent light.

When the Wall is built anew, the Charter magic is stronger than ever, almost as difficult to control as Free Magic, and the new Wall lasts for a thousand generations and beyond.

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### **Astarael – The Weeper**

At first when Orannis begins to swallow worlds and truly earn his title of “World Destroyer”, the others do not intercede. They believe that one or two or maybe ten worlds will satisfy the drive and the hunger and the curiosity, and they carry on.

Then Orannis swallows a world containing Dyrim’s get, and Belgaer arrives to find it screaming in the dark with fury, cradling the broken body of a newborn girl ripped apart by Orannis’s hunger.

“What was that?” Belgaer says.

Dyrim turns, eyes alight with fury, sparks flying from its tongue. “*Who*,” it spits. “Who. This was Abigail, my last child, how dare you fail to remember her.”

“You have had so many.”

“You could have warned me!”

“I did warn you.”

“You let my entire line die!”

“Death claims all of your little humans, in the end,” Belgaer responds.

Dyrim does not speak to Belgaer again, but when the other Five come calling, Astarael leading the charge, Dyrim joins the other Shiners to make one last stand against Orannis. Belgaer is less eager, but it looks upon Dyrim and sees only the broken soul of a little girl named Abigail, and Belgaer agrees to sing with the others when they attempt to bind Orannis.

“Will you ever forgive me?” Belgaer says into the void, as they prepare to destroy or be destroyed.

Dyrim does not answer.

FINIS

## Chapter End Notes

Join me tomorrow for Day 19: "Full Moon"! I FINALLY GET TO DO IT, EVERYONE, I'M GONNA MAKE WILL A UNICORN. If the muse cooperates. See you then :D

The inspiration from this ficlet came from [this post](#), hence why it was originally going to be a crack fic that grew out of my control.

If you'd like more information about the significance of the section titles and names, [here](#) is a good place to start. For my part, Will is Dyrim, who gives the Dead a voice or removes that of the living, which I thought was really fitting for Mr. Will who explains murder scenes and shuts people up with his sassy talk. Hannibal is Belgaer, who can give the Dead their memories and independent thought or erase them, and I thought that was fitting for Hannibal, who inspires such violence in people and also, you know, fiddles with people's memories via hypnosis. But that's just me.

P.S. If you're curious enough to think about checking out the books, I highly, highly recommend them. They've got great imagery and a really unique version of Death that just blows everything else right out of the water. Plus the Disreputable Dog is like the sassiest version of Will Graham in dog form, I just love the Dog.

# Full Moon

## Chapter Summary

Will Graham is a unicorn, sworn to defend all innocents and destroy all killers. Hannibal is a killer - and an innocent.

## Chapter Notes

Warnings: I don't think anything? Maybe attempted murder by Will, but he and Hannibal try to kill each other so many times I'm not sure that's really a warning anymore

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Chilton appears nervous as he paces in front of Will's cell, so Will says, "Worried about the full moon, Frederick?"

Chilton gives him a look. It's a mix of confusion and disbelief and dismissive pity, and Will takes it in stride. After all, he's been in jail for who knows how long, after his treatment, and he doesn't actually strike anyone as a moon-obsessed tracker.

Unfortunately, Will always knows exactly what phase the moon is in, even so far down in these damp cells where no moonlight can reach.

Mother Moon gave birth to Will's kind, after all.

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Will was born under the light of a full moon, when the raging waves of the ocean storm crash against the unyielding mass of land, at the dawn of space and time. Mother Moon called, and from the sea foam of the frothing fight between earth and water, with the wind howling around them, the first of Will's brothers and sisters emerged from water, snorting and shivering and glowing in the reflected light, a newborn creature that humans would eventually call a unicorn. After the first came many more, including Will, although of course back then they didn't have names.

They all spread out rather far and wide, and at first it didn't matter, because there were so many of them. They were renowned and immortalized in their first form, glowing white horses with horns of spiraling silver and gold, beautiful and fierce.

Nowadays, to anyone else, Will probably looks and sounds and smells and acts like a normal human. One wracked with disorders and too many dogs and weird empathy, but still a fully-

fledged slightly malfunctioning member of humanity.

Under the light of the full moon, however, it's a completely different story.

Under the light of the mother moon at her full strength, Will appears to glow, actually, like many little lights brightening his skin, and the brightest light pinprick of all right in the center of his forehead, glittering and gleaming as the moon calls to her children. Will isn't sure how many of his brothers and sisters are left, but in either way, he severed his connection to them when he severed his horn from his forehead to complete his human disguise and to carry on his mandate.

Two laws complete the mandate that guides the lives of unicorns, and they are thus: to safeguard the innocent at all costs and to take down the killers who prey upon humans.

Will has adopted many roles to fulfill this mandate. He's been an assassin, quietly ending the lives of terrible killers. He's been a judge, sentencing the guilty and freeing the innocent. He's been a shaman, guiding the young into better paths for their lives. In his most recent human incarnation, he's been a cop, although that career ended abruptly when he found himself facing off with a terrible, corrupted human incarnation of one of his siblings, twisted and gone mad, and Will had ended his life and immediately resigned, heart-broken.

It had been the first time he'd had contact with another unicorn in centuries. Now, Will wonders if it might be the last.

Thankfully, Chilton and his ilk don't have nearly the brains or equipment to realize that Will is different. When the full moon comes, it does not reach into the deep dark cells, and so Will remains powerless and human, trapped in the dark.

When he's released, he equips himself with human tools and sets off to fulfill at least one half of his mandate, now that he's failed to uphold the other.

He is going to end the life of Hannibal Lecter.

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Hannibal is just about to open the refrigerator when he smells it: artificial scent mixed with sea form mixed with wood and dust and glass. Aftershave. And not a particularly good one either.

"The same unfortunate aftershave," he says to his hidden guest. "Too long in the bottle."

He turns around and is greeted with a gun, pointed straight at his face.

"Would that I had the power to burn your heart out," Will says, voice as strong as his steady hand. "In centuries past, I could have. I suppose I'll have to settle for a hole in your heart, although it won't nearly be as satisfying as the holes I used to gore in the killers whose lives I took."

"And how would killing me make you feel?" Hannibal asks, not flinching as Will takes one steady step forward after another.

“Righteous,” Will breathes, and there’s a strange light in his eyes, fierce and blinding, as his finger moves to the trigger. If it weren’t for the half-open fridge at his back, Hannibal might wonder at the source of the light reflecting in Will’s eyes, but he finds his focus more taken up by the gun aimed at his head.

“If I’m not the Ripper,” Hannibal points out, “then you murder an innocent man.”

Will laughs, of all things. A full laugh, but not one of joy or scorn. Just a laugh, weary and body-shaking and earth-trembling. “Oh, you’re the Ripper, Hannibal Lecter,” Will says.

“Now that my eyes are clear, I can see it plain as the moon. You’re a killer. You’re a scourge unto humanity. And I’m going to make sure that you die exactly as you always should have: a human demon, falling at the hands of one of my ilk, just as Mother Moon always asked.”

Will pulls the trigger.

His other hand reaches up and slaps the gun away.

---

Will drops the gun with a cry of agony as his hand flares with pain, brutal and sharp, and the bullets scatter like grains of rice, rolling amidst the floor, as Hannibal breathes past the adrenaline rush of a bullet fired straight past his ear.

“What is this?” Will demands. He’s never had a problem ending the life of a killer. “What are you?”

“Apparently,” Hannibal muses, scooping down to retrieve the gun, “more human than you’ve been letting on. I believe the real question is: what are you, my dear Will?”

Will glares at Hannibal, and to his horror, he can just see the moon rising, its light falling across Hannibal’s face in shifting planes and arches, and in an instant, he can feel the rush of power flooding into his veins, and he knows his eyes are full on glowing like his true form when Hannibal blinks in shock.

But it’s too late.

Will sees the truth now, both sides of the same unyielding coin, and he laughs with the bitterness of its realization.

Hannibal is a killer.

Hannibal is also an innocent.

No unicorn can ever harm an innocent.

---

“I do not believe that any word could describe me less satisfactorily than ‘innocent’,” Hannibal says later on, when he’s managed to lift Will into a crumpled puddle in a chair and fetched himself some wine and lit the fire, for his own dramatic comfort.

Will sighs. “Innocent isn’t about being a virgin or being pure. Those are just . . . misconceptions.”

“Then?”

“Virginity is about intimacy, also confused with sex. Being pure is about thinking good thoughts or something, I don’t know, that’s not my forte. My kind were concerned with true innocence, which is more like . . . well, it’s hard to describe, but about being. Showing. To show your true self to the world and be open to its criticism or its acceptance, and not knowing which you’ll receive but doing it anyways. You,” Will says, “you’re innocent because you’ve never shown your whole, true self to the world. Not ever. Most people do that during sex, yes, but not everyone.”

“My art reflects me.”

“Not entirely. It reflects the Ripper. It does not reflect Hannibal Lecter.”

“I am not afraid of the revelation. It will come one day.”

“Yes, you’re afraid,” Will says with a weary sigh. “Everyone’s afraid. You’re a mortal, you’re all afraid of showing your true self to the world. To show yourself on the deepest, truest level is something no one can work up to. You just do it, and pray for the best, and afterwards you’re forever changed.”

“And you?” Hannibal asks. “Are you afraid of showing your true self to the world?”

“Are you asking?”

“Will that change your answer?”

Will smiles bitterly, unfolding himself from his chair. He might no longer have the horn that used to signify his kind, but he bleeds the same as them and glows the same as them and still has the same true form as them. “Of course it will. They didn’t get everything wrong about unicorns. Many of my brothers and sisters died at the hands of innocents.”

Hannibal’s mouth flattens into a thin line. “I have no interest in grinding up your horn or drinking your blood in a foolhardy quest for immortality,” he says with an offended sniff.

“You can’t anyways. I cut off my horn ages ago.”

Hannibal is quiet for a long, long time. Will waits, because really he can’t do anything else. He’s under Hannibal’s spell, and Hannibal could literally slide a knife through his throat and he wouldn’t lift a finger in self-defense. For every great power the Mother Moon bestowed upon his kind, she left behind one great, gaping weakness in their defense, and for many, it has been the literal Achilles heel. Many hunters used to favor severing the limbs of caught unicorns, to prevent struggles or fleeing, and many bled out for the sake of horns that the hunters barely understood.

“Yes,” Hannibal says quietly. “I would like to see.”

---

When Will emerges from the shadows, tossing his head, Hannibal's breath catches in his throat from the sheer beauty.

Will's true form is a glorious glowing horse, one whose shoulder comes past Hannibal's chin. He's tall and graceful, each step effortless yet picked with care, and Will comes to a stop dead in front with a soft whinny. His mane and tail like spidersilk, thin but strong, and glittering like dew clings to it in the early morning light. His eyes are a wide, deep sapphire blue, full of intelligence and ancient wisdom, and Hannibal rather feels like he's come face to face with true divinity.

"You are divine," Hannibal says sincerely.

Will snorts. *I will never understand you humans' intense desire to label everything to do with the moon or space or space as 'divine'.*

Hannibal lifts a hand, polite and questioning, and Will pushes eagerly into the touch, nuzzling against him like a slightly drunk puppy, playful and gentle despite his massive form, with its powerful legs and tall body.

Will smells like sea foam and wind, pure and simple, and far better than the terrible aftershave, and Hannibal wishes he could bottle it as literally in real life as he does in his mind palace.

"Your horn," Hannibal notes.

It's the one incongruity in Will's beautiful form, an ugly white scar in the middle of his forehead, like an ill-practiced layman attempting a complex surgery.

*In human form it's rather hard to hide,* Will says. *It's a rather . . . distinctive birthmark.*

"Did you destroy it?"

*No. I cannot destroy it, lest I wish to cease existing.*

Hannibal spends an indeterminable amount of time petting and stroking Will's flank and mane. He's truly a beautiful creature, and he seems spellbound at Hannibal's touch. Hannibal had often had trouble believing how such powerful creatures could be felled and tricked by the mere touch of a virgin, but now, seeing the way Will lies helpless and open and still beneath his touch, he understands on a level that is no longer debatable.

"So what happens now?"

Will offers a gusty sigh. *That's up to you. I can't hurt you. And I can't leave you. My kind are pledged to protect all innocents until the end of their days. Or mine.*

"Are you implying I'm going to kill you?"

*Funnily enough, it's not hard to imagine how you might be the death of me. How long did you know about the encephalitis again?*

“I will answer that when you answer why you fell to such a human infection.”

Will is quiet for a long moment, and then he tosses his head again, trotting around Hannibal to rest his heavy head upon Hannibal’s shoulder. *I imagine it was punishment. I was attempting to root you out, and Mother Moon is unforgiving when we break our mandate. If I were to continue my efforts, no human medication would be able to save me from whatever warning Mother Moon would choose next.*

They’re quiet for a little longer, and then Hannibal takes a deep breath and backs away. Will, thankfully, takes it for the signal that it is, and the unicorn rears up onto its hind legs as its form shifts and blurs, brightening and twisting until Hannibal can only track the progress of Will’s glowing blue eyes, brilliant and terrible, and then Will is standing before him again, naked and human.

“I think that Frederick Chilton would benefit from a taste of some of the medicine he inflicted upon you,” Hannibal says before Will can open his mouth.

Will groans. “Why did I know you were going to say that?”

FINIS

## Chapter End Notes

Tomorrow's prompt for Day 20 is "Jack'o'Lantern"!!! It's going to involve an exasperated Hannibal and a Will who is, yet again, a supernatural creature. See you then!

Also . . . if I'm going to be completely honest, I'm not as happy with this particular ficlet than I was with the others. It just didn't quite turn out like I had imagined, but there's only so much tinkering you can do. If anything's not quite clear, just comment or message me and I'll try my best to answer. If you enjoyed it despite that, then, yay!

# Jack'O'Lantern

## Chapter Summary

Hannibal is the man trying to determine why his jack'o'lanterns keep going missing. Will is the faerie boy who mistakes the jack'o'lanterns as offerings.

## Chapter Notes

Warnings: Threatened imprisonment against a person's will at one point, but it's over rather quick

Inspiration for this was of course the prompt, but also [this amazing post](#) which made me laugh so much.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

It's a fair statement that Halloween is not exactly a holiday Hannibal prefers celebrating. While he understands the value of strange stress outlets in the very stressful environment that is the emergency room, he doesn't quite grasp how dressing up in terrible versions of ghosts and vampires and zombies is anywhere near comforting. He also wonders at the parents who allow their young children to wander unattended to strange houses beginning strangers for candy that could easily be poisoned or drugged. And, finally and most importantly, he deeply disapproves of the kind of pranks he's seen on Halloween, such as randomly popping up in an attempt to scare and egging or toilet-papering houses.

The egging did happen to Hannibal once.

He had a very lovely protein scramble the next morning because, well. The ingredients were free.

The only concession Hannibal generally makes is to carve a jack'o'lantern or two to set out on his front porch, because it's an artistic outlet that gives him an unusual medium to experiment with. He's produced some very lovely carvings, if he does say so himself.

This is why Hannibal is very much *not* amused when he returns home mere hours after having set out his newest carving – a perfectly replicated solar system with twinkling stars and suns to compliment it – missing.

At first, he blames the badly trained dog that lives with his rather rowdy neighbors three houses down, as it has shown no compunctions about wandering around the edges of his

property after he firmly fenced off the garden, and so he merely shrugs and sets himself to another engaging and enjoyable night of carving a new jack'o'lantern, this time of the Headless Horsemen, complete with a bridge, lightning, trees, a rearing horse, and the rider. He finds the little branches waving in the wind most taxing, and when it is finished, he moves to set it outside with a small feeling of something anyone else might call pride.

He comes home to find it gone. Again.

This time he knows it's not the dog, as subtle complaints here and there have ensured that the dog is now properly fenced in and collared, so his next thought is a rowdy teenager, hoping to impress with something that is not his own.

This time, Hannibal carves a more adventurous scene. Leda and the swan seem fitting, so Hannibal dedicates the night to the feathers of the swan and the curves of the woman's body, until the candlelight illuminates every centimeter with glorious orange that flickers gently through the curls of the woman's hair.

However, Hannibal also sets the jack'o'lantern a little further down the porch, where he can comfortably keep watch from second floor.

He eats a sumptuous dinner from the second helping of the egging boy from his freezer in preparation and for space, builds up the fire, and settles in for a long watch.

An hour passes. Then two. Then, finally, at the third, Hannibal hears the long, drawn-out howl of a canine, and he thinks, *Is it truly so much trouble to provide proper shelter and resources for the pet you decided to bring into the family so that they would not howl their difficulties to the neighbors every night?*

It's the last thought he thinks.

When he wakes up the next morning, he finds himself with a damp shirt from where he spilled his wine when he fell asleep, and for a long moment, Hannibal can scarcely believe it. He's trained himself to operate on very few hours of sleep, which led to great success in academics and his other habits, and he was well-fed and well-rested. There was no reason for him to possibly fall asleep.

Hannibal moves on to plan B.

He makes this last jack'o'lantern the most elaborate yet, a detailed sketch of Patroclus and Achillius transposed onto the skin of the pumpkin, stretching almost around the entire circumference. He also ensures a liberal filling of aniseed balls at the bottom of the pumpkin and anoints the top of the pumpkin with more aniseed oil.

Hannibal does not bother staying up this time, but when he does wake up, the sun is almost about to rise, and, as expected, the jack'o'lantern is gone.

Hannibal smiles and gets to work.

It's laughably easy to follow the scent of the jack'o'lantern, given the strength of the aniseed balls and the relatively straightforward path the thief took, straight around Hannibal's house in a neat loop and then straight as a shot into the woods by the back, picking past weeds and ignoring the trails entirely. Hannibal follows it for what his internal sense of time says is about twenty minutes before things . . . go a little strange.

He's just stepping over a strangely neat line of mushrooms when suddenly it's like a switch has been flipped and the world turns to daytime, when before it had been the faint darkness just before the sun rises. The grass is a vibrant and brilliant green, like it's summer again, and the trees are laden with ripe fruit and fragrant blossoms. Fireflies and butterflies flit around without any concern, and Hannibal even thinks he sees a few oversized and calm rabbits hopping about in the far distance, lazily chewing on blades of grass.

He finally comes across a little clearing ringed with more mushroom patches, and at the far end he sees all of his purloined jack'o'lanterns. He's just about to stride over when a voice pipes up from behind him.

"Oooh! Who are you?"

Hannibal whirls around, scalpel sliding down into his hand to find . . . a boy.

The boy has thick curls the color of chocolate and wide eyes the color of cornflowers, guileless and curious with pupils like a cat. He's dressed in nothing more than a thin white shift and shorts, and is splayed out upon the grass on his belly, legs crossed behind him and hands propping up his chin. His hair is graced by a small crown of flowers, and vines with more flowers encircle his wrists and legs, like living bracelets. By his side pants a brindled golden dog, who – judging by the jack'o'lantern at his feet – is Hannibal's thief.

The dog lets out a sharp bark, like a laugh, before Hannibal can respond, and the boy's face lights up.

In a blink, he's up and bounding across the clearing, hugging Hannibal with crushing force, enough to drive the breath from his lungs with a strength one would not guess in his willow-thin frame.

"You're the pumpkin man!" the boy says. "Thank you, thank you, thank you!"

"I . . . I beg your pardon?"

The boy beams and dances a little circle in front of him. "I haven't had any offerings for *ages*, and yours were so lovely I just couldn't help myself," he chirps. "It's been the most exciting thing here in . . . well, forever! Winston almost couldn't believe it when he saw your offering!"

"My . . . offering?"

The boy gestures at the collection of jack'o'lanterns, bouncing from foot to foot like he can hardly keep still. "They're beautiful, thank you thank you thank you! I thought we had all been forgotten after you mortals stopped leaving out milk and bread and honey."

Bread. Milk. Honey.

The realtor who'd sold the house to Hannibal had mentioned something about the previous couple – who'd been rather elderly – operating in some strange old customs, which she'd laughed off whilst hastily scooping up an aged porcelain bowl on the porch steps. And Hannibal isn't quite as familiar with American customs, but considering the abundance of animals, the rings of mushrooms, and the food offerings, he does have a good guess as to who – or what – he's looking at.

“You . . . You are a faerie?” Hannibal asks.

The boy nods so vigorously Hannibal is impressed his head stays on. “And it was sooooooo boring,” he complains. “But you're here now, come on come on come on!”

The boy proceeds to seize Hannibal's arm and drag him with that surprising strength across the clearing, introducing him to various animals that barely even give Hannibal a second glance, and once that's done, the boy pushes Hannibal to the ground and has half a flower crown woven in his hair before he can even pause to take a breath.

“And it's going to be so much fun now that you're here,” the boy chatters. “I was getting so bored, I really – ”

Hannibal reaches out and grabs the boy's arm. It's surprisingly cool. “I am glad you liked the . . . offerings,” he says. “But I'm afraid I cannot stay indefinitely. I do have a job that will be expecting me.”

“What is a job?”

The boy's ignorance should be irritating, but instead, Hannibal finds himself smiling, oddly charmed. There's no inflection of insult at all, just mere confusion.

“Today, humans operate on money,” Hannibal explains gently. “It is how we support our families and purchase food and travel. If I do not attend to my job, then soon I would be unable to hold this land you've made your home in.”

“I don't own the land. The land owns itself. I just live here.”

“Still.” Hannibal risks a soft touch to the boy's hair, and it's even softer than he could have imagined. “I am afraid I must return, lest they become concerned.”

“But you can't,” the boy says.

“Cannot what?”

The boy spins away, planting his feet and gripping the strands of grass and flowers firmly in his hands. “You can't leave me.”

Hannibal climbs to his feet, brushing away the grass and flower bits. He doesn't quite tower over the boy, but even ineffective displays of power can have their uses. “I must.”

“YOU CAN’T!”

There’s a moment of silence, and then the entire clearing explodes. Hannibal flinches, and roots emerge from the soil, grasping his legs so quickly that they’ve entangled all the way up to waist before he can even think to move away. The trees themselves bow down and branches wind their way around Hannibal’s arms, and in moments he’s found himself pinned against a tree, bound so securely he can barely breathe, much less move.

The boy whirls back around and grasps his face, blue eyes blazing. “You’re never going to leave me,” he snarls, suddenly much less of a boy and much more a raging wolf. “You came here of your own free will, you’re mine now, you will never ever ever ever leave me. I won’t let you. You’ll stay here and we’ll be happy and I’ll never be alone again and neither will you and – ”

The dog growls, deep and dark, and the boy’s voice dies.

He takes one step back. Another. A third.

The trees suddenly breathe, and the branches release so abruptly that Hannibal slides all the way to the ground before he can recover.

“Winston will show you the way,” the boy says, voice trembling, suddenly subdued and small again, just a boy in a plain white shift and flower crown. “Good-bye, Hannibal Lecter.”

Then he vanishes.

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Hannibal spends the next week carving jack’o’lanterns with a single-minded determination, until his steps and porch and railings are cluttered with them, but not a single one is taken, and there’s no more canine howling signaling a stealing run from Winston or the boy. Even his most delicate and beautiful carvings produce no response, and when he sets out to find the clearing again, he spends two hours finding absolutely nothing.

Finally, in desperation, Hannibal lays out a saucer of milk, a slice of freshly made bread, and a cup of honey.

That night, he wakes up abruptly to find the faerie boy sitting on his bed, cross-legged and sullenly dunking the bread in the honey and milk, chewing with the fiercest little glare.

“Hello again,” Hannibal says, his heart in his throat.

The boy tears another chunk of bread away from the slice, like a wolf tearing a strip of meat from a carcass.

“What is your name?”

Another dunk. Another chunk. The boy’s eyes don’t ever leave Hannibal’s face.

“Why did you even come?” the boy asks suddenly, his fierceness falling away to reveal a helpless yearning in his blue eyes. “Why did you lay out offerings for me if you never

intended to stay?”

It’s like watching an angel cry. It’s beautiful but terrible, and Hannibal is struck with the strangest urge to cradle the boy close and soothe his tears away, even though he’s never had any similar urge in his life.

“I did not know.”

The boy scoffs. “Everyone knows. It’s common knowledge. Every mother tells her daughter and every father tells her son.”

“It’s been years and years since that was the tradition,” Hannibal says. “Many people no longer believe that your kind even exists, let alone that there was a reason for the old offerings that used to be laid out.”

“But you knew.”

“I have . . . a fondness, shall we say, for old tales.”

“But if you don’t intend to dance with me and stay,” the boy says slowly, “then why the honey and milk and bread?”

“Is it inconceivable to think that we might become friends?”

“Friends. I don’t know what that word is.”

“Are you not friends with Winston?”

“No,” the boy laughs. “Winston is not my friend. Winston is my family.”

“Well . . . friends can be like family. Family you have chosen.”

“But I chose you,” the boy says. “I chose you and you refused. I was about to bind your obedience to my will before Winston stopped me.”

Hannibal remembers again the squeezing pain of a thousand branches and roots creeping up his limbs, binding him so tightly he could scarcely breathe, and wonders at this divine creature, so small and beautiful, yet so fierce and dangerous and beyond anything Hannibal’s ever known before.

“Maybe I will allow you convince me otherwise.”

The boy’s eyes light up. “Really?”

“Well. Perhaps if you tell me your name,” Hannibal prods teasingly.

“You couldn’t pronounce it, it’s beyond the capability of a mortal tongue. But . . . when they used to give me offerings, they used to call me . . . I think it was ‘Will’. Yes. They used to call me ‘Will’.”

“Well, Will,” Hannibal says, savoring the tongue of such a simple name for such a gorgeous creature, “would you like to learn how to carve your own jack’o’lantern?”

This time the boy nods so vigorously he falls off the bed.

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“Why can’t you just think the blade through?”

“You will find that the satisfaction of a job well done is more about the journey than the destination.”

“But I could just transform the pumpkin. See? Just ask, they love politeness, they’d do anything for you.”

“But I lack those powers. Here. Take the knife. Try for a square.”

“It – Ugh – Why is – Why is it so difficult?”

“You must put your heart into it, my dear Will.” There’s a pause. “No. No, not literally – not your actual – No. How did you even manage to – ? Is it even yours?”

“ . . . Maybe.”

“Put that . . . away. Back. Put it back.”

“Awwwwwww.”

FINIS

## Chapter End Notes

Tomorrow's prompt for Day 21 is "Scythe"! I'll finally be bringing on Miriam Lass to my rotating cast of characters, and I may or may not write my very first Unhappy Ending for a fic. Although Hannibal might decide he doesn't want that. So. See you then!

# Scythe

## Chapter Summary

When Miriam Lass releases a tell-all book about how she caught the Chesapeake Ripper, Freddie Lounds ensures that she gets rights to the first interview the second the first public reading is over.

## Chapter Notes

Warnings: This ficlet has an ending bordering on unhappy and ambiguous. Read at your own risk if you're not a fan of that kind of thing. If you're not sure, then the inspiration for this ficlet was the movie "Atonement". So.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Will knows Hannibal is planning something.

How could he not know? Hannibal's the most skillful manipulator Will's ever met, but considering that half of Hannibal resides in Will's mind, Will can almost predict every single move Hannibal wants to make.

And currently, Hannibal has nearly doubled the length of time he generally spends walking in the woods by their home, scavenging wild mushrooms and prowling his territory like the self-satisfied wolf his returning smile always proclaims him to be, basket full and eager to trade sweet, lingering kisses by the fire. So Will imagines something is being planned, but for now, he's content to leave it be.

After all, he too is planning something.

And it all comes a final head at dinner when, with great solemnity, they eat a rather grand dinner, even by Hannibal's standards. The second Will thinks he can't eat another bite, Hannibal rises and glides away to return with every more food, bearing platter after platter of succulent meat, fresh vegetables, fried eggs, tender fish, sweet homemade cake and fragrant fruit for dessert, and more and more and more, until finally Will crosses his utensils over his plate.

"Are you planning to gobble me up, Big Bad Wolf?" Will teases.

Hannibal gives him the most adoring look imaginable, almost frightening in how out of place it is on Hannibal's face after someone's just refused to eat more of his food, and then kisses

him like he can't help it.

"My, what big teeth you have," Will says.

"All the better," Hannibal says, "to devour you with, my darling."

"Is that why you restocked the lube?"

Hannibal smiles a slow, wicked smile, and starts to clear away the plates, elegant and precise in every single motion.

"But seriously, what's with the entire production? The food was fantastic, but you're gonna have to roll me into bed after all that."

"I have no objection with stealing you away into the depths of our bed," Hannibal says. "My strength has significantly recovered in the two years since our birth from the sea."

Will eyes the straining fabric that barely contains the breadth of Hannibal's wide-set shoulders. Hannibal's worked hard to get himself back into shape, exercising frequently and for long periods of time, until now he can strike as violently and powerfully as a snake, deadly and swift and determined as ever to protect the prey he's worked so hard to coil his winding manipulations about.

"Tell me about it," Will murmurs, and thinks of long, dark nights on a rocking boat, made all the more difficult by the power and urgency with which they made love on their tiny bed, clawing and fierce in their desperation to reaffirm their lives.

"Either way," Hannibal says, "retire to the living room, if you do not mind. I have a gift for you."

Will lights up. "We can get a dog?"

" . . . Not that gift."

"Awww," Will complains, but he smiles as he speaks, and with one last kiss to Hannibal's cheek, he's off to their living room, where he builds the fire and opens the curtains, which allows for a stunning view of the ocean and beach at their feet. It's not a private beach, but the area is so remote it might as well be, and Will's already made several plans to construct a dock and other productive endeavors, like an energetic make out session or two, cradled in the waves of the sea with nothing but water to separate their bodies.

Hannibal emerges a few moments later, bearing a small box in his hands that he sets proudly on Will's lap like a dog returning with a squirrel caught and killed in its jaws.

"What's this?"

"Open it and discover for yourself."

Will gives him a look. But in due time his curiosity takes hold, and all too soon the wrapping paper lies in tatters at his feet, revealing a small box that he's also forced to figure out how to

open. When he finally does, the creation inside takes his breath away.

It's a glorious wood carving of the ravenstag, almost exactly as Will remembers it from his dreams and nightmares, with four strong legs and a giant crown of antlers and intricate little feathers intermixed with the delicate fur. The wood smells like spice and mushrooms, like this home they're created in their cottage by the sea, and Will can see every single moment of love and time Hannibal lavished upon this creation, determined to have it exactly perfect, discarding every single scrap that failed to meet his expectations and starting anew.

And then Will frowns. "Hannibal . . . the gift for a two year anniversary is cotton."

Hannibal crosses his legs with an arched eyebrow, as if to say, *You little ignorant mongoose, why do I put up with you?* "By my reckoning," Hannibal counters, "it has been five years."

"But – "

Will stops. Swallows.

"You sentimental asshole," Will says.

"I loved you from the moment you insulted me in Jack's office," Hannibal says. "This is not something new."

For a long moment, there is silence, as Will stares at his ravenstag with blushing cheeks and watering eyes, whilst Hannibal sips his drink calmly, in perfect time with Will's frozen, sluggish thoughts chasing around in frantic circles in his brain.

"You make my gift seem ridiculous," Will says.

"Nonsense."

Will swallows and reaches into his pocket. The pebble he withdraws is smooth as silk, due to years and years of pounding by waves and sand, freckled and pockmarked with colors of black and blue and brown, and Will had examined it for days before he was certain it was one.

Hannibal stares at it uncomprehending.

"I found it. On The Cliff," Will says, and Hannibal's eyes snap to him. "When we argued, that time in Barcelona. I . . . may have . . . returned. To our birthplace. I figured it was right. You know. To use when building a nest. But then I just . . . never quite got around to giving it to you. I guess . . . happy anniversary?"

Hannibal's fist closes around the pebble, and he says hoarsely, "I believe that most penguins were dismissed from the myth of finding the perfect pebble for their mate."

"Most," Will says, and nothing else.

Hannibal leaps up from his chair and seizes Will so hard his fingers are liable to leave bruises as he presses wine-sweet kisses to Will's dazed lips. "You magnificent, divine, gorgeous

creature,” Hannibal growls. “I could never predict you, in all your mind, in all of your life, and you – you are the most perfect gift I could ever have received, Will, Will, Will, my darling, my dearest, my beloved, Will – ”

They tumble into bed, and the rest of the night is spent in wordless appreciation of the nest they’ve built.

Later, Hannibal will fold Will into his warm embrace, and they will sleep. Will yawns and decides that for a two year anniversary, they’re not doing so bad after all. Certainly better than anyone could have predicted. And, you know, not that bad for a slightly twisted happy ever after.

The End

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Miriam Lass closes the book after uttering the final closing words and the crowd launches into cheers. Yet she does not meet anyone’s eye nor does she smile, despite having record breaking sales for a new author with a book titled with the likes of “Atonement”. She leaves the room after the first reading of her book with her eyes downcast and a heavy, silent heart.

Freddie Lounds scores the first interview.

“Miriam Lass,” she says, candy sweet and soft as ever, “your new novel, Atonement. I have a few questions about it.”

“Don’t you all,” Miriam says.

“So it’s your first novel – ”

“It’s my last novel,” Miriam interrupts.

“Oh? After such great success, I’m sure many would willingly wait for a second. Or a third. Or many more, in fact.”

“I’m retiring,” Miriam says. “From . . . From the FBI, from the spotlight, from the media. And I figured that I might as well say what I had to now, before I was forgotten forever.”

Freddie laughs, charming and short. “How could we forget you?” she coos. “You are the Ripper’s Reaper! You caught the most infamous serial killer in the entire American history! How could we ever forget you?”

“There’s always someone new, killer or hero.”

Freddie pauses, the smile frozen, clearly thrown, and then quickly switches tactics. “So many people simply adore your book. They say it’s the best love story they’ve ever read. And especially the ending, so adorable and loving and – dare I say it – *hot*.”

“I . . . I didn’t write it that way,” Miriam replies. “I wrote it to be kind.”

“Kind? To who?”

“Hannibal and Will, of course.”

“What kindness needs to be served to them?”

Miriam takes a deep breath, and for the first time, she looks straight at Freddie as she answers, voice strong and solemn. “Because, you see, I was too much of a coward to recant my accusation of Hannibal Lecter as the Chesapeake Ripper. I was wrong. We all were. Hannibal Lecter died because of me.”

“But . . . but that’s not . . . not what happened.”

“Of course it is. You all are just too wrapped up in the happy ending to see the truth. I accused Hannibal Lecter after being found, and he went to prison and we were all too blind to see the truth. And Will Graham tried to tell us, over and over, but we told him to take a vacation, see a different psychiatrist, just . . . stop trying to prove Hannibal’s innocence. Hannibal and Will never could have had a happy ending, you see, because Will Graham died never having seen Hannibal again. The Great Red Dragon ripped him apart. And I was never able to set things right with Hannibal either, because when he escaped and went after the Red Dragon, the cops sent to get him back shot him before they could realize that he was just trying to end the Dragon, not cause any more trouble.”

Miriam pauses, not even noticing as Freddie stares with a mouth wide open and pen fallen slack against her notepad.

“So, you see,” Miriam continues, “Will and Hannibal were never able to have the time together they both so longed for, and deserved. This book is . . . it’s my Atonement. Not Hannibal’s. Not Will’s. Mine.”

Freddie gapes a little more, and then finally clears her throat. “But . . . But how are you to blame? You were doing what everyone thought was right.”

Miriam laughs, hollow and forced. “I wielded the scythe, didn’t I? I cast him as the devil and myself as the reaper and I destroyed their lives in a single moment.”

“That’s an . . . interesting choice of words. Why scythe?”

“Because I thought I was harvesting grain to make bread, bread to end the famine and put everything to rights again. Instead I was harvesting souls without caring whether they should have been harvested or not.”

“Ma’am,” someone interrupts, “your time is up.”

“Of course,” Miriam says, and she’s up and gone before Freddie can even think for another question to ask.

“Damn,” Freddie breathes. “Now *this* is going to make an incredible article.”

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Down by the cliffs, in a wide expanse of warm ocean water, two otters float calmly in the waves, sleeping peacefully with their heads propped against each other. One has a jagged scar

upon its right cheek, and the other a circular pockmark on its furry belly. They're bound so tightly in kelp to keep themselves from rolling away that they couldn't be more stuck together if they tried, yet still they clasp paws firmly, together in the face of the unpredictable sea that threatens to tear them apart.

They will sink or swim together, and they will never be apart.

FINIS

## Chapter End Notes

Join me tomorrow for Day 22: "Hair Raising"! In which I translated the prompt to mean . . . hair raising to the reader. And possibly another ambiguous ending based off a TV show. See you then!

If any dialogue feels vaguely familiar, it's cuz I stole it from the movie. Which I watched and bawled over courtesy of my at-the-time infatuation with James McAvoy.

Also, if some bits were unclear, the idea is that Miriam successfully picked out Hannibal as her kidnapper, he went to jail, Will tried to get him out cuz love, then the great red dragon popped up sooner than in the show and made off with Will, Hannibal escaped and went after him only for to find a dead Will and a very alive dragon, Hannibal then summarily destroyed the dragon, then the cops showed up and shot Hannibal cuz he was scary and blood-covered, and Hannibal used his dying breath to toss himself and Will off the cliff, where they died. And then Hannibal's planted evidence on Chilton emerged, and everyone covered everything up, so Miriam wrote her book in defiance. Now. As to whether the otters are significant or not . . . I leave that up to you \*winks\*

# Hair Raising

## Chapter Summary

When Will wakes up, they tell him he's lucky to be alive and Hannibal is alive. When Will wakes up, they tell him he's lucky to be alive and Abigail is alive.

## Chapter Notes

Warnings: Open/Ambiguous ending. Last ficlet was a tad more easily interpreted, but this one will actually just be an open ending. If you don't like open endings, be aware of that before you read

Most of my ficlets are just straight up AUs, but this takes place after the season 2 finale.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

When Will wakes up, the first thing he registers is confusion.

This is mostly because he feels nothing but the softness of a familiar, comfortable bed beneath his back with scratch hospital linens on his front, but around him, he smells sharp antiseptic and fresh flowers and hears the constant and all too familiar beeping of various hospital machines and the ringing of a familiar alarm clock. When he raises his hand to shut it off though, he finds himself exhausted by that simple movement, and when he closes his eyes again, his hand falls limply back to the bed, and Will knows nothing else.

---

When Will wakes up for a second time, he finds himself with a scar on his belly and a cheerful nurse proclaiming, "You have a visitor!"

The nurse is gone before Will can say anything else, so he just sighs and lays back. Not like he can get out of the bed anyways, considering all of the wires everywhere and the stark black wristband that proclaims him a "FALL RISK" in big capital letters.

Then *she* walks him, unsteady on her feet, with a pole with a swinging bag of solution trailing her like an absent puppy, a splash of red on her neck.

"Abigail," Will breathes.

She offers him a trembling smile before all but planting herself in a seat by his bed. "I'm so glad you're awake."

“How – I mean – how are you feeling?” Will asks awkwardly, unable to keep his eyes off the terrible red scar that graces her neck, in the exact same place where her father had opened up skin and blood – and where Hannibal had returned, ceremonial father to her, knife in hand and a terrible stark blandness in his eyes as he opened the exact same wound, an insult and forgiveness both in one gesture.

Abigail shifts. “I miss my scarves,” she admits. “But the nurses say I can’t wear them until I’m sure the wound is completely healed and unlikely to open again.”

“I saw you bleed out,” Will says abruptly. “I held your neck as your pulse faded.”

“Hannibal is – was a surgeon,” Abigail reminds him. “He knew exactly where to cut so we wouldn’t die. On you. And on me.”

Will pointedly doesn’t look down. He’s touched the scar on his belly only once, and the feeling of pain and sensitivity had ensured that he hasn’t touched it since. He doesn’t want to think about it. He doesn’t want to think about Hannibal, arms enfolding him as he thrust his knife into Will’s stomach, soothing his shivers and whimpers of pain.

After a long moment, Will asks, “But you are? Recovering I mean.”

Abigail smiles faintly. “Yes. Yes, I am.”

The nurse returns at that point and gently ushers Abigail out, claiming Will needs his rest, so she dutifully leads, pole trailing her like a ghost, as the nurse begins to make adjustments and take readings for the voluminous clipboard at the foot of Will’s bed.

“I would have thought the FBI would be the first visitor,” Will says.

The nurse gives him a distracted smile. “Agent Purnell has been very clear that no one is to speak to you until you’ve recovered. You’ve done your job, sir.”

“Um . . . okay.”

The nurse nods at the tablet hanging off his shoulder. “You’re well enough to read the news, if you want.”

Will does so as soon as she leaves, not wanting to seem too eager. What he sees the second he fires up the breaking news of the day sends his heart rate monitor into a frenzy of beeping and spikes.

*AGENT JACK CRAWFORD LAID TO REST TODAY WITH A HERO’S SEND OFF*

*EXCLUSIVE PHOTOS OF THE RIPPER’S MURDER BASEMENT, RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF BALTIMORE*

*HANNIBAL LECTER: THE DEATH OF THE RIPPER – OR IS IT?*

---

When Will wakes up again from unsettled dreams, it's like the previous day never happened. The nurse greets him cheerfully, adjusts some monitors, and announces that he has a visitor. Will groans and braces for the interrogations of the FBI, although to be fair, he has some burning questions of his own.

His visitor drives all of those questions straight out of his head.

Hannibal Lecter walks in, alive and well and calm, bearing a small bag of what looks and smells like his trademark homemade food.

"Hello, Will," Hannibal says.

Will's mouth hangs open uselessly.

Hannibal's smile fades, replaced with wrinkles of faint concern. He leans closer, ignoring Will's flinch, and checks at the IV lines. "I was not told they had increased your dosage. Are you feeling alright, Will?"

"You – You're – You're alive???"

"Have you been having nightmares again?" Hannibal asks gently. "I assure you I am alive and well as can be."

When Will continues staring, Hannibal takes the initiative and encloses one of Will's hands between his own, and Will finds himself overly conscious of his sweaty, dirty hand while Hannibal massages it gently.

"I am here," Hannibal says quietly. "I am real. I am alive. And so are you. Calm yourself."

"I think," Will stutters, "I had a really bad dream."

Hannibal frowns. "I think I will speak to the doctors about your dosage again," he says disapprovingly. "But in either case, I am sure good food will do you wonders. Unfortunately, you are not fit yet for something too strong, but I find that a good chicken broth can work wonders."

"No prized chicken from China? No wolfberries or ginseng?"

"I am capable of a simple dish, Will."

And, well, Hannibal's not wrong. It's just plain soup with some tiny bits of vegetables and other ingredients to give it flavor, but it smells and tastes wonderful to Will's suddenly ravenous stomach, and he's not even aware that he's staring mournfully at the last pitiful drops until Hannibal is suddenly laughing and leaning over to pour more delicious soup from a steaming canteen.

"I would have thought that the FBI would be beating down my door," Will says eventually.

"Agent Purnell has more things on her mind to deal with," Hannibal says blandly. "Either way, I believe I made myself quite clear when I ensured that the FBI was aware that they are

not allowed to interfere with your recovery.”

Will swallows another huge spoonful of soup. “Did you threaten her or something?”

“I promise, Will. I do not threaten.”

“Uh-huh,” Will says, because he’s not really sure what he can say to the man he’s pretty sure just gave him human-flavored broth. He’s not sure about anything anymore, actually. He definitely remembers arriving at Hannibal’s house with the intention of . . . doing . . . something, but he also definitely remembers being steadfast in his belief of who and what Hannibal was. Yet here the man is, walking free and clear, despite all the work Jack and Will put forth.

Will resolves to resort to Google the second he’s clear, and Hannibal seems to sense he’s got something on his mind, because after leaving another steaming canteen of soup, Hannibal leaves with a soft, “Good-bye, Will.”

The headlines do not reassure Will at all.

*JACK CRAWFORD: GUILTY – SHOULD THE FBI HAVE SEEN THIS COMING?*

*WILL GRAHAM: ANGELIC HERO OR CURSED VILLAIN?*

*HANNIBAL LECTER CLEARED OF ALL CHARGES; FREDERICK CHILTON ON THE RUN AFTER MURDERING TWO FBI AGENTS, CONSIDERED ARMED AND DANGEROUS*

“What the goddamn hell,” Will says.

---

After a few more revolving visits from a not-dead Abigail and not-dead Hannibal, Will slowly figures it out. He doesn’t need sleep anymore, after all.

Whenever he lays down, he wakes up in either one of two “realities”, per se. One where Will apparently saved their eyes by shooting Hannibal dead, earning himself a gutting slice and losing Jack but saving Abigail from dying and another where Will did nothing of the sort, leaving Jack with the lion’s share of entrapment blame and Hannibal free and Abigail still buried god knows where.

In his Abigail-reality, Will is lauded as a hero for shooting the Ripper. Purnell even visits and thanks him personally, offering him a permanent role as consultant with a contract that says he can choose if and when to be involved with any future cases, including a hefty sum for repaying of his extensive medical bills. Hannibal is found guilty in death, although apparently he was clever enough to do some legal maneuvering that leaves Will and Abigail as the owners of his house after the FBI are done investigating the horrors of his murder basement.

In his Hannibal-reality, Will is not so cherished. Purnell does visit, but mostly to inform him that he’ll be relegated back to his teaching role permanently, with no more consultations. Jack

has been convicted and sentenced for entrapment, his gun and badge seized. Chilton is on trial for the Ripper's crimes. And Will is for some unknown reason living with Hannibal in his enormous antler-filled house.

In both realities, he finds himself messing up, slipping, mentioning Hannibal to Abigail and Abigail to Hannibal enough times that the doctors all but order him to see a psychiatrist.

Bedelia du Maurier is not impressed with his stuttering explanation.

"Oftentimes the mind comes with strange and interesting ways to protect itself from reality," she says coolly, the emphasis on "interesting" more akin to "not interesting at all."

"I don't feel protected," Will says. "I feel violated. I can't tell what's real anymore."

Bedelia sighs. "Last time you came up with the idea of visiting Jack Crawford. Did that help?"

Will thinks back. In his Abigail-reality, his visit had been to a silent cold grave. In his Hannibal-reality, his visit had been to a noisy asylum, with Jack roaring and raving in his face, spit flying from his straight-jacketed form. Neither had brought any measure of peace or help to Will whatsoever.

"Definitely not."

"Have you tried a diary or journal? Maybe writing it down will help you come to terms with what has happened."

*And what would I write? Will wants to say. That in one half of my life, I go to sleep and wake up knowing I killed Hannibal because he gutted me and killed Jack and nearly killed Abigail? And that in the other, I go to sleep and wake up knowing that I let Hannibal gut me to preserve our cover, that I knowingly sleep in his house with Jack in prison and Abigail's blood on Hannibal's hands?*

Blood.

Hannibal.

The basement.

Will hasn't found it yet. But he's fairly certain he could find it.

"I might have another idea."

"Then I suggest you try it," Bedelia says indifferently. "Just be careful of your mind creating yet another reality to protect itself."

---

Will doesn't bother to check the house when he arrives. It's dark outside and he doesn't really give a damn what reality he's in right now. Both Hannibal and Abigail would tell him not to,

anyways. But he needs to find it, and something in his gut tells him that it will have all the answers he could possibly want.

The door isn't actually as difficult as he thought to find. There's a small key sitting innocently at the end of Hannibal's wine rack, and a quite bit of stomping around the floor reveals the trapdoor.

The steps are cold against his feet, but soon he's at the end of the steps, the key fitting perfectly into the lock, and Will takes a deep breath.

Soon he will have all the answers to his questions.

Will opens the door, and immediately all thoughts of discovering answers fall away immediately.

In front of him is an elegant table, festooned with all the terrible and strange decorations that are the immediate signature of Hannibal. At one end sits Jack Crawford, slumped as if in sleep with ropes a gentle binding around his wrists. There are four place settings, one in front of Jack and three at the other end.

Hannibal sits at the other end.

Abigail sits on his right.

The other empty place is on his left.

"Will!" Abigail says, delighted.

"Will," Hannibal says, much more subdued but just as happily. "We're so glad you agreed to join us."

Will blinks. He's not really sure what he could possibly do, really.

"Is everything all right?" Abigail asks.

A deep, snarling beast uncoils from deep inside Will's soul, and the key drops soundlessly from his numb fingers. He feels his face stretch into an enormous and uncontrollable smile, because it's his family, his entire family here and waiting and alive for him.

"It's perfect," Will says, and sits down to dinner.

FINIS

## Chapter End Notes

Join me tomorrow for Day 23: "Scarves"! From now on we return to the slightly twisted happy endings that have preceded this two open ended ones. This one will involve

Hannibal trolling Will and Jack cuz Hannibal.

This ficlet was inspired by the television show "Awake" that had a short-lived run on NBC. I also might return to this one day, because there are a lot of scenes I didn't flesh out here that I think might have merit in the Hannibal universe. And by merit I mean creeping myself out.

# Scarves

## Chapter Summary

Wherein Hannibal accidentally advises Jack Crawford and Will Graham on the best ways to annoy each other.

## Chapter Notes

Warnings: overdose of fluff, plus nonchalant discussion of murder and some aspersions on the stereotypes of people on the spectrum

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

For Hannibal Lecter, it's a fairly unremarkable day. He wakes up at 0400, ensures that dinner prep is completed, lunch is packed, and breakfast is cooked, does his daily exercises, reads his daily dose of online and newspaper articles, then gets dressed and is on his way to his office at 0730 promptly, so that he can open his office at 0800 sharp to get his practice going.

What is less unremarkable is a harried phone call from Agent Jack Crawford at 1000 hours, where the agent barely gives Hannibal the time to say his name before he's barking out, "I'm trying to recruit a new agent and he won't even look at me. What do I do?"

Hannibal blinks. Smoothes his tie. Sits down.

"I was not aware the FBI was adding a new member to your unit," he says instead.

"Don't play games with me, Dr. Lecter," Jack growls. "I just spent twenty minutes trying to catch this man's eye."

Hannibal sighs. Sometimes he really does wonder if the fun he has poking at Jack is worth the annoyance of dealing with him after the poking is done. Other times he just sits back and lets the agent bellow himself hoarse. "Is a particular reason you can think of for this man to wish to avoid speaking to you?"

"Yeah, he's supposedly on the spectrum."

"Jack."

"Fine, fine. I may or may not have cornered him before and it may or may not have ended badly."

“How badly?”

“The man wears high-collar sweaters and flannels, plus eyeglasses he doesn’t even need, just to avoid me.”

Hannibal suppresses a laugh. It doesn’t do to cause unnecessary pain. “Eye contact is valued as important,” Hannibal says. “It demonstrates trust, respect, and above all honesty. Perhaps, if you truly believe that this man does not need eyeglasses, then you should remove their obstruction from the equation.”

“What, just take them?”

“I said trust, Jack. I would suggest that you carefully and politely request him to remove them. It will allow him the choice to engage with you on his own terms, and even the illusion of a little power may make him more agreeable to listening to your pitch.”

“I’m not an elevator salesman!”

“If this man is as truly determined to avoid you as he has been,” Hannibal counters, “you may need to make a short a pitch as an elevator man.”

Jack hangs up.

Hannibal carries on with his day.

---

Will calls him 1200 hours, sounding flustered and annoyed. The echoes around him suggest that Will is hastily and hurriedly shoving papers into place, which tells him that Will is attempting to depart somewhere with great speed, and Hannibal accordingly wastes no time starting the conversation.

“Difficult morning class?” Hannibal asks.

Will grunts. “Everybody says they hate 8 AM classes, and then when I have them at that time, they fill up in two seconds and then everyone complains about the exams being held ‘too early’.”

Hannibal hums. “We all have our burdens to bear.”

“Mine are unruly students. Yours are probably patients who get overly attached. Or leave tissues on the floor.”

“An interesting insight into my character.”

“Does that mean stop?”

“It means, Will, that perhaps you are allowing another annoyance to influence your mind about students and causing you to deflect your anger onto other things and people. Even buried under a mountain of misspelled exams, you generally are not overly bothered by the incompetence of those under your care.”

“They’re students, not dogs.”

“It is not terribly difficult to imagine you with a pack of 300 puppies,” Hannibal muses.

That, at least, prompts a laugh from Will, and Hannibal can imagine the way his shoulders naturally loosen, just a little, as he moves his attention onto more positive spins.

“Okay, fine, you win. I really just wanted to know where your scarves are.”

“My scarves? They’re on the left.”

“Which left?”

“The second walk-in closet.”

“Oh. Thought it was the third.”

“That is meant for shoes, you heathen,” Hannibal chides half-heartedly. Will has as little organizational sense as he does fashion sense; Hannibal’s long since given up on changing that. Will’s closet is organized solely by the occasion and practicality of his clothing, and nothing else. Any attempts to reorganize often mean Will spends hours pestering Hannibal for the exact placement of all of his favorite clothes. “Why do you have need of them, you hardly enjoy wearing scarves?”

“Some arsehole stole my glasses,” Will grumbles, and hangs up.

---

Jack calls again at 0200, just as Hannibal is wrapping up an appointment with a rather lovely woman who Hannibal is strongly encouraging to leave her cheating partner. She’s got an engagingly entertaining savage side, as evidenced by the ferocity which with she’s thrown herself into researching and retaining a very good lawyer.

“Thank you so much, Dr. Lecter,” she says, “I won’t forget the help you’ve given.”

“It was my pleasure,” he replies, and notes in his mind that her partner will be alone in their big house for the next week at least.

This time, when Jack calls, he doesn’t even let Hannibal speak before he speaks.

“What kind of message does sitting on someone’s car give?”

“Depends on the person.”

“The same one as before.”

“Again, it depends. If they are truly avoidant of you, they may choose to abandon their car and find another way home. If they are in a more aggressive mode, they may choose to confront you and order you off. Or they may choose to simply floor the gas and ignore the consequences.”

“I’ll take my chances,” Jack says curtly.

---

Not fifteen minutes later, Will calls.

“Hannibal, there’s a stalker sitting on my car,” he whines.

“You were a police officer. Surely there are ways to deescalate the situation,” Hannibal says absently, smoothing the latest additions to his newest sketch.

“Tried that. I’m wearing your scarf all around my face.” Will makes a rude noise in his throat. “I got in my car and now he’s sitting on it staring at me like some sort of vulture waiting to eat me.”

“Vultures prefer carrion, Will.”

“That’s exactly what I’ll be if he gets his way.”

Hannibal sighs, but unlike the sighs he had with Jack, these are had with a smile. Will never fails to entertain him and, more importantly, never annoys him. “If you choose to run him over, I will speak to the lawyer on our behalf.”

“Good, she creeps me out.”

“She is well respected and excellent at her job,” Hannibal scolds.

“Still terrifies me.”

There’s the squeal of abused tires and then the faint sound of inarticulate rage that’s only barely distinguishable over the sound of rushing wind.

“Well, he doesn’t look injured,” Will muses.

“Shall I have our lawyer on standby?”

“Shut up. And what’s the name of this fancy arse wine you wanted again?”

“I wrote it down in the note section of your phone,” Hannibal says patiently, because trying to say the name will only make Will laugh and spell it horrendously and inevitably come back with the wrong bottle of wine. Again.

“You know my password?”

“Will.”

“I’ll bring back your fancy arse wine.”

“Thank you.”

“If we get sued, you’re still dealing with the lawyer.”

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Hannibal is in the middle of putting the final touches to the first course of dinner when his door bangs open and a distinctly unhappy Jack Crawford barges into his kitchen. His only saving grace is that he at least had the courtesy to remove his dirt covered shoes and remove his hat and coat.

“Agent Crawford,” Hannibal greets. “Would you like some coffee?”

“We’ve known each other for over a year now, I think you can call me Jack,” he grunts.

“That depends on whether or not you are finally accepting my invitation to dinner,” Hannibal counters. He’s been inviting Jack for the past three months, and Jack has declined over and over on the basis of pressing cases, court appearances, and his ill wife.

Jack sighs, and some of the unhappiness drains from his shoulders to be replaced with true weariness. “No, I – I really am sorry about that, Hannibal. Bella’s just . . . well. She needs me.”

“I imagine she does. And I imagine that you need a rest, Jack, instead of chasing after potential agents.”

“Huh. I wish. Chasing implies some success. Now the bastard just hides behind scarves.”

“You did take his glasses, Jack,” Hannibal says.

Stops.

Thinks.

*Interesting.*

Jack is in the middle of replying to that – something defensive and placating, by the sound of it – when the door opens and slams again, and Will, glorious and beautiful and red-cheeked from the cold, walks into the kitchen, bearing a bottle of wine and heading straight for the homemade apple cider with determination in his eyes.

He changes course abruptly when he sees Hannibal, so Hannibal opens his arms and welcomes Will into them.

“Hello, my darling,” Hannibal murmurs, kissing his hair.

Will nuzzles into his neck, sighing and wriggling like a happy cat. When they first met, Will had been jumpy and touch-starved, but now that he has an outlet for his stress and an anchor for his imaginative mind, he tends to sink into all of Hannibal’s touches like they’re a drug, and Hannibal never tires of watching the way he simultaneously lights up and melts into a puddle when Hannibal embraces him.

“Hello,” Will says, drowsy and with a drugged smile. “What’s for – Crawford.”

Jack gapes at them, and Will's expression flips from bliss to murder so fast Hannibal raises an eyebrow at it.

"You," Jack stutters. "You two – You two know each other?"

Hannibal tilts his head, but Will beats him to the response, freeing his left hand and pointedly baring his ring finger where the simple band of rose-gold inlaid with sapphire rests.

"I would hope so," Will snarks, "given that he's going to be my husband in six months."

"Will," Hannibal says, "this is Agent Jack Crawford of the FBI. Jack, this is my fiancé, Will Graham. I was not aware you two were acquainted."

"We're not," Will and Jack say at once, with two matching glares of deep loathing. It's almost like watching two alpha predators snarl and poster across his kitchen table, and Hannibal is struck by the desire to sketch it.

Will pinches him, probably because he can sense that desire.

"I," Will declares, "am going to change. You are going to leave. Good-bye."

With that, he marches out of the kitchen, head held high, pausing only to allow Winston and some of the others of his faithful pack to catch up and follow his steps as he ascends to the bedroom, muttering under his breath the whole way.

"I apologize," Hannibal says. "I was not aware that the agent you were attempting to court was my Will."

Jack gives him a look that all but screams disbelief. "Graham's not an agent. He's a teacher."

"Hence my confusion."

Jack squints at him, but Hannibal's been scrutinized by far more probing and far more powerful eyes, so he maintains his nonchalance without any difficulty, returning to his dinner preparation with an absentminded expression and air of goodwill.

Jack accepts it, at last. "I'll get out of your hair. Tell Graham . . . I'll . . . I'll leave the terms on his desk."

"I will convey your message."

When the door shuts again, Hannibal makes it as far as plating half of the vegetables when Will reappears in the doorway, coat and shoes gone, and crosses his arms.

"Did you just play me?"

"May I ask what you are referring to?"

"Did you," Will repeats, stalking closer with every step, "just play Jack Crawford and me?"

“Jack Crawford? Undoubtedly. You?” Hannibal cups Will’s cheek, bringing them close together to take in the lovely scent of his beloved. “Never.”

Will sighs, but the way he leans into Hannibal’s touch suggests that he’s been forgiven. “What does he even want?”

“To recruit you to form a special unit.”

“For what?”

“Will, those raspberries are for dessert. There are extra strawberries in the fridge if you cannot contain your appetite to a reasonable hour.”

“I might have already eaten those.”

“I bought extra and put them on the highest shelf.”

“What? Seriously? Awesome!”

Hannibal smiles at that, because no matter his insistence on keeping food to reasonable meal times, Will always insists on snacking and constant snacking for that matter. It’s gotten to the point where Hannibal stocks up on certain healthy snack items and stashes them around the house to prevent Will from ingesting more deplorable choices.

“I believe that Uncle Jack has succeeded in gaining approval for a special task force to catch the Chesapeake Ripper,” Hannibal answers as Will gleefully tears into the box of fruit.

Will punches him. Hard.

“Rude, Will.”

“You want me to help catch you?” Will demands. “Are you *insane*?”

“I imagine it will provide plenty of entertainment.”

“For all of two seconds!”

“What a glorious two seconds those shall – Will. That is not how to punch someone. I have shown you the correct method.”

“You bastard.”

“My parents were legally married and therefore such a title cannot be applied to me.”

“I’m not going to do it,” Will declares mulishly.

Hannibal pulls him close, nuzzling into his curls and allowing his accent to distort his words to the point that Will reads him more based on tone than on meaning, and enjoying the Will instinctively submits and struggles at the same time, his mind telling him to fear and fight

and love and listen all at once to the man with a predator's sharp teeth and a sheep's stolen, bloody skin.

"But just imagine," Hannibal murmurs, kissing his neck. "You will get a front row seat to each and every one of my displays, instead of waiting to see it blurred and cropped on the news the day after."

Will generally gets a kick out of Hannibal's displays, but oftentimes he can't see them firsthand because the police get there and because he has class early in the morning and needs more sleep than Hannibal does. He's often lamented of wishing to have seen Hannibal working, even if he is generally happy to work on establishing Hannibal's alibi instead.

Will twists his head and snaps his teeth playfully at Hannibal's face. "You willing to take that risk?" Will purrs. "I might decide I want to see what you look like in a straightjacket sooner rather than later."

"And I," Hannibal croons, "might decide that hair would make a suitable addition to some of your fish hooks."

Will grins. "Well played, Doctor Lecter. Fine, I'll think about it."

"That's all I ask," Hannibal says. "Now shoo, I would like to finish preparing this dinner in order to serve that grumbling stomach of yours before you make off with all of my ingredients or those hounds of yours succeed in stealing the majority of the main course."

"Hey, Buster only did that once."

"I seem to recall two incidents."

"Maybe your memory isn't as great as you claim."

"And maybe that is not your pack now, attempting to knock over my platter of bank teller?"

"Damn it! Buster, Winston, off!"

FINIS

## Chapter End Notes

Tomorrow is Day 24: "The Witching Hour"! Another dark!Will, slightly twisted story that will feature blackmail. See you then!

# The Witching Hour

## Chapter Summary

When Will connects the dots, he has two choices: turn Hannibal in or remain silent. He picks the more reasonable option and blackmails him. Hannibal is just charmed enough to play along with it.

## Chapter Notes

Warnings: more nonchalant murder discussions, plus a mention of pet harm (BUT HE LIVES I PROMISE)

I present more sassy dark! Will for your enjoyment, folks

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

For Will, it's almost too easy. The pendulum swings as he stares at the newspaper photo of the latest offering of the Chesapeake Ripper, and Will sees with a clarity he's never felt before in his life. The Ripper is male, middle-aged, European sensibilities with American medical training, clever, practiced, patient, and above all, sloppy.

To Will, at least, he's sloppy.

He's lonely, and every kill is a beautiful artistic design, though each is a little less elegant than his first. His first few, the Ripper did for the pure pleasure of ripping into flesh and proving superiority. Now, the Ripper is becoming bored, because no one can see what he's saying, so his kills are becoming less and less about pleasure and more and more about a statement. And to Will, a statement is far less interesting and far more revealing than any pleasure-filled impulse killing.

Will prints and spreads out the photos of the many doctors working with the FBI, and discards them all almost at once. Chilton doesn't have the spine. Bloom doesn't have the fluid morality. This one is too rigid in their work, this one too mundane. No one has that spark.

Then Will comes across a mentor of Bloom's who isn't officially involved in the investigation, but whom Bloom apparently went to for help, as Tattlecrime gleefully reports.

Will pauses. Grins.

He's found the Chesapeake Ripper.

He rewards himself with some fresh takeout pizza, a rare treat indeed, and cuddles with Buster and the rest of his pack as he falls asleep in his little shack of an apartment.

---

Hannibal doesn't exactly frown when he sees the man sitting in his kitchen in the middle of night, but it doesn't stop him from flipping on the lights all the same. It makes the man flinch, at least, as his eyes adjust to the sudden bright light filling the room.

"And who, pray tell, comes calling at this hour of night? And without even a knock on the door." Hannibal tsks. "How rude."

The man, shockingly, grins at that, leaning back and splaying his legs and arms like he's in his own home. "Someone who wants to make a deal," the man says. "I hear the witching hour is a good time for that."

Hannibal raises an eyebrow. "I'm not sure what kind of deal I could offer you." *Except perhaps a moderately slow death instead of a very slow death.*

The man throws a folded and crumpled newspaper on the table. Hannibal doesn't twitch, except some deep, dark part of him purrs in pleasure at the sight of his latest kill splashed across the front page, blood and flowers and crooked bones and all. It had been a particularly pleasurable kill for once.

"See, I think that you have a secret that you're not so keen on Dr. Bloom and the FBI knowing," the man says. "And I think you might want to know that you're not the only person who knows that."

"And who have you told?"

"If we haven't come to reasonable terms in an hour, I'll have told every newspaper in the state," the man answers casually. "With evidence and broken alibis and a full profile."

Hannibal sits down. Now his stomach is beginning to take a backseat to his mind, and this man is sounding like a very interesting morsel indeed. He's not remarkable to look at, just plain brown hair and blue eyes and a light build and frankly awful fashion sense, but his eyes are sharp in a way that reminds Hannibal of the mongooses he had seen in zoos, predators that danced with other predators for food and fun, and reveled in the fight as much as the victory.

"Yet I see no FBI agents at my door. How interesting."

The man scoffs. "Like those idiots could ever catch you," he says, tone full of disdain, like a god watching tiny ants run in circles. "You'll never slip up. And if you're ever caught, I guarantee they can't hold you. What kind of cage could ever hope to contain you?"

"Some would say death."

"I don't want you to die. I want you to agree to my terms. Simple as that."

“And those terms would be?”

“Money,” the man replies with a shrug. “Isn’t everything about money? Besides, this house says you’ve got a lot of it, and the old Lithuanian archives say you’ve got even more tied up in that great old estate of yours.”

“You are . . . attempting to blackmail me,” Hannibal says slowly.

The man checks his watch. “Only for about thirty for minutes. After that, I plan to watch only long enough to ensure that you and I are running in the opposite direction when the FBI lights a fire under your arse.”

Hannibal smiles. Against his will, he finds himself undeniably charmed by this man’s attitude, and although he’s fairly certain that he could take this man down and disable whatever alarm system he has with a comfortable amount of time to spare, he finds himself more curious about where it could possibly go. After all, it’s not just anyone that walks up to the most feared serial killer in America and demands money in exchange for silence after digging up some rather painful truths. In another life, Hannibal might’ve tried to turn this man into a protégé.

Instead, he might have to settle for financial backer.

And he can always kill the man later and feast on a long-savored and marinated meal in the future.

“I would prefer a written agreement,” Hannibal says eventually. “It will bind you and me together, as it should be, with equal repercussions for a breach of trust on either side. In return, I will give you 24 hours to leave, if you change your mind, and I will not pursue you even if I find the FBI knocking on my door.”

“Wow, you’re crazier than I thought,” the man observes. “Fine, but then we’re definitely meeting in a better place than your crazy house.”

“I beg your pardon?”

“Seriously, what’s with all the antlers? I didn’t see a stag in the Lithuanian crest. You secretly a Lannister fan?”

“Lannister?”

“ . . . Whatever. 24 hours. And then I’ll find you.”

“As you wish,” Hannibal says agreeably, and then the man is up and gone in a flash through the patio door, slipping into the darkness easily as a snake into water. Behind him, Hannibal smells dog and oil and water, and somehow the mix is far more harmonious than Hannibal would ever have thought it would smell.

---

Will walks into Hannibal Lecter’s office and immediately does a double-take at the antlered stag statute at the far end of the room.

“Seriously?! Why the stags?”

Lecter gives him a look that falls somewhere between *Because I’m already creepy and they don’t really hurt that* to *I’d like to dine on your tongue*. Because of who he is, Will thinks it falls more towards the latter, so instead he quickly shifts the topic at hand before Lecter’s impulses take over his curiosity and Will does become dinner, because Winston is finally coming home today after being cleared from the vets and he does not want to miss it.

“So what’s this written agreement thing you were talking about?” Will asks.

Lecter hums and removes a thick sheaf of papers from his desk, which he separates into two neat piles. He’s even gone and highlighted where Will has to fill stuff in.

“I’m not gonna be cheap,” Will warns, looking at the glaring yellow blank with a dollar sign in front.

“As you said, money is not my primary concern,” Lecter shoots back, reclining in his chair in front of the fireplace like a great basking leopard. “Name your price.”

“Five thousand a month,” Will says finally. It’ll pay for a new apartment, rent, food, and his dogs, which is all he really cares about. And five thousand alone is more than Will’s ever had in his bank account ever.

“That is patently ridiculous,” Lecter says, looking insulted. “You value your contribution to catching the Chesapeake Ripper at a measly \$60,000?”

“Hey, five thousand was better than I got out of the Human Cello.”

Lecter gives him a faintly impressed look. “So this is not your first time, then,” he says, and somehow he manages to make it sound impossibly dirty, like Will’s just pulled off his pants and sat on the man’s lap.

Will shrugs. “Student debt sucks, and I’ve got bills to pay.”

“And dogs, I imagine.”

“Stalker.”

“Merely a keen sense of smell. You have at least five, to have such a strong and distinctive scent that is so varied.”

“If you’re an alien, I’m definitely getting that in writing.”

Lecter gives him a slow smile and smoothly removes both paper and pen from Will’s hand. In a neat surgeon’s hand, he crosses out Will’s five thousand dollar scribble and replaces it with double that. Then, ignoring the way Will’s jaw drops, he does the same to the second pile of documents, flips to the end where their names are highlighted, signs both in a large flourish reminiscent of John Hancock, and then flips everything back around to sit accusingly in Will’s face.

“Sign there, please. Once you’re finished reading, of course.”

Will does exactly that, because he’s not about to be screwed over by a shark. But the papers are reasonably straight forward. Lecter will transfer \$10,000 a month into Will’s bank account, half via a check and half via direct deposit, and the agreement will last as long as both parties are agreeable. If anyone changes their mind, they must give written notification at least a week in advance and give the other twenty-four hours to flee in whatever direction they choose before notifying the authorities or taking any other action. The only weird thing is that Lecter insists on the check half of his payment being delivered in person, at the conclusion of a “homemade meal”.

“I’m not eating your chicken.”

“I have been told it is very delicious.”

“Yeah, and did the people who told you that know the chicken was a who, not a what.”

“My butcher names all of his chickens.”

“Is your butcher God?”

“He feels like one,” Lecter allows.

“Still not eating any meat you serve. Except maybe fish.”

“Fish? I must say, that is not a medium I have extensively experimented with,” Lecter muses. “Perhaps that will change now.”

“Yeah, it will, cuz you’re not serving me any fish I haven’t caught.”

Lecter looks him up and down, and once again Will feels stripped to the bone in his presence. He could deal with being naked – he’s been on the receiving end of many, many pranks that left him hanging upside from various undergarments – but with Lecter it’s like he’s putting his surgeon’s fingers straight into Will’s heart, pushing and poking and feeling just to see the way it throbs and quickens.

“And what a fascinating lure you are,” Lecter says eventually. “By all means, you are more than welcome to bring fish to my table. I think I would welcome the challenge.”

“And why am I eating your weird food again?”

Lecter sniffs, and this time he can’t hide his disgust. “You smell like grease and takeout,” Lecter says. “If I’m going to be supporting you, I am going to at least ensure that you will not die of a heart attack whilst under my care.”

“Love you too,” Will replies sarcastically, and signs the damn papers.

---

The first month, Will almost expects to wake up to find Lecter’s hands on his throat with a needle at his arm.

Instead, he wakes up to a cheery notification of a \$10,000 check clearing in his bank account.

Will celebrates with more pizza, because he knows it'll annoy Lecter immensely, and also actual meat to make good dog food, for which he receives enthusiastic reviews from his pack.

---

In the second month, Will gets his \$5,000 and a fancy little invitation in his mail, with cheerfully invites a "Mr. Will Graham" to attend a dinner with "Dr. Hannibal Lecter" at his convenience. Will picks a Sunday night, just to be a little asshole, and sends it back with the confidence that Lecter will either kill him for being so rude or go out of his way just to show off.

Turns out Lecter loves showing off.

Will turns up in his oldest, most comfortable clothing, with sturdy boots and warm flannels, and Lecter doesn't bat an eye from his place at the stove with pristine chef's clothing. He serves Will an elaborate seven course dinner, from elegant salads to spiced carbonara pasta to elegantly twisty sushi to gorgeous tartlets and fondant squares. Each course is more gorgeous than the last, and Lecter even gives him different beverages to pair with each course.

At first, Will is too busy eating to speak, for which Lecter seems to take a strange measure of pride.

Eventually though, he cracks. "I thought you were a doctor."

"I am."

"So when do you have time to cook?"

"If one wishes to accomplish something, it becomes easy to find the time."

They spend the rest of the night debating various sayings and proverbs, and at the end of the dinner, Will departs with a full, warm belly, a new warm coat that fits perfectly because Lecter is indeed a stalker, and a host who insists on being called by his first name.

"But why?" Will whines, snuggling deeper in the coat that feels like heaven.

"I call you Will. You can do me the courtesy of calling me Hannibal. Unless you'd prefer to be rude?"

"Love you too," Will snarks, since he knows *exactly* where the rude end up in Hannibal's house, but he does send Hannibal a thank you note with his first name instead of his title.

---

In the third month, Will's notification of a deposit is seconded by an enormous package of homemade and carefully packaged meals.

"What the hell," Will says.

Hannibal's note merely says, "Pizza should be a last and final resort, not the first choice."

“Screw you too, Hannibal.”

He still ends up eating Hannibal’s food though, and his dogs eat better than ever. They’re also happier than ever, given the new townhouse Will’s managed to secure with his newfound money, with much more land to run around and play and neighbors who are noisy smoker drug dealers. Will also gets a kitchen that does not double as a living room and a bedroom that is separate from his study. It’s amazing.

Just to add insult to injury, Hannibal’s dinner this month consists of homemade pizza. Several homemade pizzas. With homemade tomato sauce and homemade pizza crusts and homemade cheese.

It tastes amazing.

Will points an accusing finger at Hannibal. “You’re trying to make sure I can never eat regular pizza again, aren’t you?”

Hannibal eats a neat bite of his own pizza. “I am merely attempting to broaden your palate, my dear Will,” he says placidly. “If you find this kind of pizza preferable to your own options, that is no fault of my own, I am afraid.”

---

In the fourth month, Hannibal decides to broaden Will’s palate of wines, and Will dozes off in his chair midsentence rant on the unfairness of FBI screening.

When he wakes up, he finds himself in boxers and a t-shirt in a bedroom that is not his own. His clothing is freshly laundered and folded in a nearby chair, and Hannibal’s even laid out pain killers, water, towels, fresh toothpaste and a toothbrush, and a neat freaking diagram on how to get to the kitchen.

“You got me drunk,” Will complains once he manages to find the kitchen and get his butt into a seat that isn’t swaying.

Hannibal gives him eggs and bacon – from a clearly labeled package, much to Hannibal’s disgust – and doesn’t even bother to give him any response. Will pouts and eats his food, and spends the rest of the day being obnoxious and poking around Hannibal’s house. Hannibal says nothing, and merely steers him towards the library and the garden when he gets too overbearing during Hannibal’s . . . well, whatever Hannibal is doing with that freaky instrument in his bedroom.

---

In the fifth month, Will is watching Hannibal’s dinner prep with avid eyes when Will’s bane walks in the door.

“Dr. Lecter!” Jack Crawford says with a smile. “And . . . Will Graham.”

Hannibal smiles back, not a trace of annoyance or shock in his expression, for which Will is definitely envious, given that he’s still trying to pick his jaw off the floor at Hannibal’s brazenness.

“Hello, Agent Crawford. Yes, this is Will Graham. I am currently mentoring him, and was attempting to install a higher sense of nutritional responsibility.”

“What?” Will says.

“And with not too much success, apparently,” Hannibal says with a sigh, but Will can see the secret smile on his face, and when he wipes off his hands and comes around the table, he places one warm hand on Will’s shoulder. Will almost wants to shove it off, but that’s mostly because he can tell Hannibal doesn’t mean comfort or reassurance by the gesture; it’s more like a brand declaring Hannibal’s stakes and property, like he’s being proactive to keep Crawford from encroaching on something – or someone – he sees as his first, finders keepers.

Crawford clears his throat. “I asked you to help with a profile?”

“Ah, yes. One moment please.”

The minute Hannibal’s out of earshot, Crawford gives him the stink eye. “What did you do to Lecter?”

“Uh, nothing,” Will lies.

“You’re sitting in his kitchen. No one sits in his kitchen.”

“Maybe I’m special.”

“In what way?”

“Well, he’s great in bed,” Will says, because he knows exactly how it sounds when he says it all low and leans back smirking in his chair. “Plus the money’s not that bad, you know.”

Crawford looks like someone just shoved a lemon down his throat. “You have . . . an arrangement?” he stutters.

“Student debt sucks.”

“I offered you an honest job!”

“Yeah, so honest,” Will parrots sarcastically. “Creeping around your own superiors to lure unsuspecting agents in to set the loose on crime scenes no one else wants. I’ll pass, thanks. Hannibal gives me all the money and mentoring I could ever want.”

“You could save lives, Will. Lives.”

“Or I could just continue sitting here,” Will says, “in Hannibal’s kitchen, eating good food and talking good talk. Which would you take?”

Hannibal chooses that moment to return, and Crawford speeds out the door like his tail’s on fire.

“Did you insult my friend?” Hannibal inquires.

“You’re friends with the guy tasked to catch you?”

“Jack Crawford is engaging and entertaining, and I find him utterly fascinating.”

Will pauses. “You like messing with him.”

Hannibal smiles silently.

Will taps a finger on the table. In the heat of moment, it had seemed a great idea, but now it seems a little less, with the real predator in the room waiting with wings mantled and claws at the ready. “I may or may not have implied you were, like, my sugar daddy or something,” he admits cautiously.

“And?”

“You really don’t care?”

“Do you think I would be phased so easily? Such arrangements have gone on for centuries past.”

“Yeah, but you’ve got a reputation.”

“I am mentoring someone with little funds who could benefit from the experience I could offer,” Hannibal says calmly. “I fail to see what damage my reputation could suffer from such a deed. If anything, I am likely to be lauded.”

“Wow, you’re such a prick.”

“Language.”

---

In the sixth month, Will cancels their dinner for the first time.

Hannibal is rather stormy on the phone at first. “You are breaking an agreement we made in good faith and in writing,” he says.

“I – Winston is literally on death’s table, you think I give a crap about our agreement?!” Will shouts back, unable to contain the tears any longer, sliding to the floor and nearly dropping the phone. He feels like his world is falling apart. One second Winston had been barking at the squirrel, and in the next minute, some dude on a motorcycle had jumped the curb and collided with him, leaving Winston bleeding and whining whilst Will had immediately freaked out.

“ . . . Your dog?”

Will hangs up. He can’t deal with Hannibal’s pretentiousness right now.

To his shock, Hannibal shows up only half an hour later, bearing a bag full of food and warm hot chocolate.

“What the hell are you doing here?”

“I thought you might forget to eat. And you might want company,” Hannibal murmurs.

Together, they eat and sit in silence for the better part of two hours, until the vet finally comes out to tell them that Winston will make it. Hannibal pays the bill without batting an eye or letting Will override him, and then he drags Will out, protesting the whole way, and gets him in clean clothing and then drugs him so he falls asleep. He cancels his appointments and then drives Will to the vet the next day, offering only some tissues when Will returns joyful and still sniffing.

“I might have gotten dog spit on your clothes,” Will mutters, as they drive back to Hannibal’s house.

Hannibal is silent for a long moment. “They are your family,” he says finally. “I cannot begrudge you for the connections you have made long before you met me. I can only hope that you find it within yourself to accept what comfort I can offer.”

Will looks at him, this weird man who hates rudeness but drove around for thirty minutes until he found Will after he hung up, who made vegetarian dishes and fake meat dishes just to mess with Will, who juggles eggs and kitchen tools just to make Will laugh, who challenges his thoughts and builds his confidence, who is a murderer with the voice of an angel and the humor of a morbid magician. And Will realizes that suddenly he hasn’t thought about Hannibal as the Ripper in months, actually. Hannibal is the man who gives him food, who walks his dogs with him, who drives out in the snow to give him warm clothing. Hannibal is the one human connection Will feels no shame over.

Hannibal is the one person Will feels anything close to love for.

“Can you drop me off at my house?”

“If you wish.”

“Yeah.”

---

Will sends Hannibal a note, as the contract states, announcing his intention to break it. He can’t stay here and continue to bleed the man dry and lead him on with nothing but jokes and strings. He loves Hannibal so much his heart feels like bursting, but Hannibal tolerates him for curiosity and to stay out of prison.

He can’t keep doing this to the one human connection he has that he gives a damn about.

So he’ll give Hannibal his life back, and then he’ll vanish. He’s gotten more than enough money, given how many times Hannibal’s “accidentally” deposited extra money in his account.

Hannibal doesn’t reply, but the standard invitation doesn’t come, so Will assumes the message has been sent. He spends that night surfing for new houses, settling his pack,

packing his belongings, and then slowly and thoroughly feeding each and every page in his copy of the contract into the hungry fire.

Will wouldn't change Hannibal for the world, and it's only right to make sure Hannibal knows that.

---

That's probably he doesn't really say anything when he wakes up to find Hannibal sitting in his kitchen, a blank expression on his face and some weird crate thing at his feet.

"You intend to leave," Hannibal says.

"Yeah, there are some places down in Florida that look good," Will mumbles, twitching nervously and scratching his hair. He's had bad dreams all night, so he probably looks and smells like crap, and there are sweat stains all down his shirt and pants.

"May I ask why?"

Will shrugs and pastes a fake smile on his face. "I've got what I wanted. So did you. Time to move on."

"You did not 'move on' from Tobias Budge."

"Stalker," Will snaps automatically.

Too late, he realizes he's played right into Hannibal's hand. He's proved he cares about Hannibal and that the contract isn't his top priority.

"It's just time to go," Will says hastily.

Hannibal cocks his head, and then he moves, so fast Will barely registers the movement before Hannibal slams him into the wall, teeth bared like the predator he is, hands crushing vises on Will's wrists.

"You're lying to me," Hannibal declares. "Our contract demands honesty."

"And I ended it!"

"Say it to my face," Hannibal says. "Tell me to my face, William. You owe me that courtesy."

"I . . . I . . . ."

There's a spark of triumph in Hannibal's eyes, and Will is released.

"You are lying to me," Hannibal repeats. "Has Jack Crawford gotten to you? You must know that I will not hesitate to help you."

"And that's the problem!" Will explodes, because that's exactly what he did not want Hannibal to offer. "You'd help me, Hannibal! Hell, I'd bet you be willing to surrender to the cops right here and now, just to help me!"

Hannibal says nothing, but the way he shifts his eyes speaks volumes.

“I don’t want you to change,” Will says. “Don’t change for me. Don’t you dare change for me. I made a deal with the devil, and I will be damned if you let the so-called angels cast you down again just for me!”

“Maybe I would not care.”

“That’s not the man I made a deal with.”

“Breaking that deal does not undo those changes,” Hannibal snarls, and suddenly he’s just as furious, just as loud. “You *have* changed me, Will. You cannot erase those changes anymore than you can turn back time. You are mine, and I am yours. Leaving me will not change that. I will chase you to the ends of the earth if I must.”

“Then kill me.”

“You must know I cannot.”

Will slides down the wall with a thump. “I didn’t want to change you,” he says weakly, looking at this great armored predator with its vulnerable spinal cord turned to Will and Will alone.

“You already have,” Hannibal says, like a vow.

There is silence for a long moment.

“So what now?” Will asks.

Hannibal steps back and opens his crate. Inside, something shuffles and whimpers, but Hannibal grasps it easily all the same. “Now,” he says, “we make a new contract.”

He deposits a squirming little puppy in Will’s arms, who immediately begins the process of baptizing Will with spit, spit, and more spit. Will laughs despite himself, cooing and petting before remembering that Hannibal is watching with an air of faint smugness.

“What’s her name?” Will asks.

“Check her collar.”

Will does.

Will promptly chokes.

“That ring is worth more than my entire house,” Will says blankly.

Hannibal blinks, reptile slow. “I would give you my life, Will,” Hannibal says. “I would give you my life and my freedom and my heart, carved straight from my chest. Compared to that, what is a simple ring?”

“Did you just . . . propose to me?”

“I said such contracts had been formed for centuries. Sometimes, they ended in marriage. I imagine ours would not be so different.”

“Why are you so okay with this? I changed you, it’s like the one thing you hated the idea of.”

“Maybe you did change me,” Hannibal allows, and kneels in the dirt and dust and fur of Will’s dirty, tiny house. He grasps Will’s shoulders and holds him like a religious convert holds the most precious, delicate holy relic imaginable. “However, you forget one important thing. If I allowed you to change me, then you also allowed me to change you. And, Will, I think there is nothing I would not give to see what you become.”

“Not someone who wears three piece suits.”

Hannibal kisses him. “No. But I do have a rather . . . tied up pig, as it were, in my basement. I think you and Winston have a score to settle with him. And I would love to see what your mind could create with it as your canvas.”

“Love you too,” Will says quietly, and for the first time, he says it without a trace of sarcasm.

FINIS

## Chapter End Notes

Tomorrow's prompt for Day 25 is "Apple Picking"! I return again to Greek mythology, a supernatural Will, and a creature Hannibal. See you then!

# Apple Picking

## Chapter Summary

Hannibal is Ladon, the great hundred-headed dragon who guards the golden apples of Hera. Will is the only Hesperides whom he somewhat tolerates.

## Chapter Notes

Warnings: brief description of someone getting stabbed and nearly dying

What's that, I already used Greek mythology this month? Well, I hope you liked it, cuz here's some more Greek mythology! Although it's by no means perfect, most of this information came from my brain, the Percy Jackson series, and Wikipedia.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Will doesn't intend to become an immortal when he visits Hera's temple.

No, seriously, he doesn't. He just went in to sacrifice to curry favor, so that when he broke his marriage agreement, he wouldn't be cursed for eternity, and more importantly, his poor fiancée would not be cursed because he failed to be interested in marriage.

Instead, Hera herself appeared, and after a long conversation about the merits of marriage, she had offered him a position among the Hesperides, to tend to Hera's gardens and trees in exchange for her protection, her favor, and, of course immortality. And it's not like Will had anything to lose, so he had shrugged and said yes.

Now, he can feel his heartbeat accelerating with every step he takes towards Ladon, the great golden one-hundred headed dragon whose bulk is curled around the most valuable part of the garden.

"If Ladon accepts you, then you will have a place here," Hera says and then stops. "Carry on."

Trembling, Will takes a few more steps forward, only to stop abruptly when half of the heads swing in his direction. A few bare teeth, a few hiss, and a few more even spit sparks, although mostly the dragon seems to understand that Will – unarmed, unarmored, and bearing a basket full of fish – does not mean him any harm. Either way, after a few moments of frozen silence, the dragon seems to relax, and Will starts walking again.

The tree of golden apples is as beautiful as Will's heard it is, glowing from roots to leaves, and so tall Will couldn't reach it even on tip toe. Its beauty is matched only by the beauty of its guardian, with golden scales and eyes of amethyst and ivory claws.

Finally, Will comes to a stop right in front of the biggest head of all, which at least concedes to lower to Will's level.

For a long moment, Ladon stares at him. Then, with a delicacy that belies his great size, he leans down, sticks his head in the basket, and starts eating, mowing through the fish like eating is going out of style and even licking at the bottom of the basket when he's done. He even whines when he's done, like he's asking for more.

"Well done, Will Graham," Hera says, appearing by his side. "Ladon has accepted you. Welcome to the Hesperides."

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After spending a day getting used to his new immortality, Will starts learning what it takes to be one of the Hesperides. Mostly, it involves a lot of work, since there are only five of them at this time.

His fellow brothers and sisters aren't really the Hesperides, of course, because the real ones were the Sunset Goddesses, daughters of the great Titans. But although the gods adapted and changed and continued, finding new meaning in life as the humans forget and move on, the Hesperides were not so fortunate. One by one, the originals faded away, and then Hera began to replace them, one at a time, with young men and women who pledged themselves to tend to her great garden. It's why no one's managed to pinpoint their exact number. Perhaps there were seven originals, but the number fluctuates all the time. Some of Hera's chosen ones break their vows and are summarily exiled, stripped of her favor and often crumbling immediately to dust considering how time works outside the garden. Others, after a very long time, chose to leave, and Hera – if she's in a good mood – allows it.

Each member takes a different part of the forest to guard. Alva tends to the fields, where they grow the grains and crops. Bertie tends to the creatures of the forest, healing the sick and keeping the balance of predator and prey. Jane patrols the edges of the forest, killing or distracting those who get too close during sunset and sunrise, the only times the realms of the garden and mortal Earth are bridged. Peter . . . Will's not really sure what Peter's responsible for, but Will gets the impression that Peter's been around for a long time, so Will accepts his assignment of tending to the rivers without too much trouble.

Besides, it had been Hera's suggestion. She'd told him that to be accepted, he'd have to demonstrate himself to Ladon, and Will had chosen to fish in the rivers for the best catches to impress the dragon.

Now, Will ensures the rivers are clean, that the water truce is preserved, and that the cycle of rain and evaporation continues without trouble.

However, he also finds out that even among immortals, there are still rookie rituals.

A week after arriving, at dinner, Peter gives Will an enormous basket piled full of fruits, breads, meat, and fish and tells him to toddle off and deliver it to Ladon. “He doesn’t need to eat, but he likes it. Your turn. Chop chop.”

Will doesn’t like the look in Peter’s eyes, but given that everyone else is carefully not making eye contact, he simply accepts the burden and begins the long march from their end of the garden to where the great tree and Ladon resides, sleeping as he always is unless someone or something troubles him.

When Will approaches, the dragon heads all lift up, but this time, instead of hissing in warning, the dragon offers a soft cry of greeting.

“Hey, Ladon,” Will says. “I’ve got some food for you. Peter says you generally eat at least once a week.”

The second he puts the basket down, Ladon snakes forward and tips it over, spilling the entire bounty over the grass. His heads go to work immediately, and in seconds, almost everything has vanished down his many throats, except for one rather toasty loaf of bread and a few normal apples.

*Eat.*

Will leaps several feet in the air. “Who said that?”

Ladon snorts fire, which Will realizes after a minute is his version of laughter. *Eat*, the dragon repeats.

“But I have dinner back with the others.”

*Eat.*

Will sighs. “Might as well, I guess. I don’t think Peter likes me very much, anyways,” he confides, and to his surprise, dragon-breath toasted bread tastes pretty good, actually. It tastes like fire and fish and meat, which Will guesses is because Ladon had just been eating when he’d belched out the fire to toast Will’s bread.

Ladon makes no objection when Will leans against him to keep eating, and in fact, two of Ladon’s heads curl around Will, like armrests of golden scales, and together they watch the sun set.

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Jane barely contains her shock when Will comes stumbling back the next morning, yawning. Ladon’s wings had made great warm blankets and the grass had been soft, but trudging all the way in the search of breakfast hasn’t exactly made Will the happiest person.

“You’re uninjured,” she says.

“Um . . . Yes?”

“Generally Ladon’s pretty careless when he eats,” Jane explains. “He likes to be . . . intimidating. I got a bruise the last time I did it.”

“Ladon didn’t even touch me,” Will counters, confused. Ladon had been nothing but polite and courteous, and his touches had been reserved to gentle nudges of his many heads to rearrange Will whenever he himself got up and moved around to coil in a different configuration around the tree.

Jane whistles. “Then I think you’re gonna spend a lot more time with him,” she says.

And, well. She’s not wrong. Like clockwork, every week Peter shoves a basket at Will and makes him go bring the offerings to Ladon. Eventually it becomes so routine that Will goes and gets his own food for the basket, because Peter tends to throw everything in haphazardly, bruising precious fruit and squishing soft bread, so Will piles everything very carefully, picking the best of the best for the dragon, and Ladon rewards him by sharing some of the morsels and never shoving Will away when he falls asleep near the dragon.

Will eventually figures out that the reason Ladon is so intimidating to the others is that he’s really more intelligent than the others give him credit for, and treating him as a pet is a sure way to get snapped at.

Will never makes that mistake. Ladon never speaks to him again, but he can see the intelligence in Ladon’s eyes. This dragon is far older and wiser, and treating him with dignity and respect is just common sense, although Ladon never turns down a good scratch or two if Will gets the right spot just right.

Soon Will ends up spending more time with Ladon than anyone else, because Ladon doesn’t judge him or say rude words or call him mean names behind his back. Ladon shares his food, covers Will with his wings to protect him from the chill of winter nights, and even lets Will clamber up on top of him from time to time to trim the dead branches from the golden tree, although he still gets a little antsy whenever Will gets too close to an apple.

But still. It’s nice, this life, and Ladon only makes it better.

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Then the day comes when suddenly Peter starts treating him amazingly. He gives Will the best and biggest share of breakfast, he pops up randomly asking questions about the rivers, and he even offers to make the trek to Ladon himself instead of making Will do it.

Will turns down the breakfast, gives monosyllable answers, and takes Ladon’s dinner to the dragon himself.

It all comes out when Peter wanders into Will’s room to “ask a favor.”

“What kind of favor?” Will asks warily. Peter’s the oldest of the current Hesperides, and the most powerful. Hera’s favor seeps into their being and over time, that has results. Peter can do many things with his mind alone that defy reality.

“I want a golden apple,” Peter says. “And you’re going to get it for me.”

Will laughs, at first.

Peter doesn't.

The smile slides straight off Will's face. "Are you serious?" he demands. "Ladon will rip you apart."

"But not you," Peter replies. "That's why you're going to do it."

"You can get your own damn apple," Will says, because Hera had said the greatest thieves of the apples – next to random heroes – were the Hesperides who broke their agreements, and Hera is not known for being the most forgiving of the Olympians. He's not about to go through eternal torture because Peter wants to find out how the apples taste.

Peter abruptly switches tactics. "Aren't you tired?" he asks, suddenly kind and solicitous again. "All of your work, Will, and for what? You keep the rivers healthy and the water truce working and you tend to the fish and the crabs and the water, and for what? For a goddess who doesn't even remember your name anymore? For gods and goddesses who spit on humanity and make us their tools and pawns? Why should we serve gods when we are the new gods?"

There's a long silence, and Will says nothing. He doesn't need to.

He doesn't really care much for Hera. Truly. But Ladon is his friend, and he won't betray the dragon because of one man's ego.

Peter's face twists. "Fine," he spits. "Be a slave. One day you'll regret it."

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Peter goes back to treating him like dirt, so Will shrugs and carries on. He doesn't even think about praying to Hera, although Ladon noses him worriedly when he admits what happened.

"You're just a big softie," Will says.

Ladon bares his teeth. It's nowhere near as scary given that two heads are curled around Will and one head is in his lap, begging to be petted.

"You are," Will says. "And don't worry about it. Peter ignores me and I ignore him. Nothing to worry about."

Will comes to regret this response when, two months later, as he walks down to Ladon carrying his basket, he feels the strangest sense of pain in his gut and looks down to see a sharp gleaming blade sticking out of it. The basket tumbles away, spilling its offerings onto the ground, and Will falls to his knees, desperately trying not to scream in pain as the blade inches ever further through his skin and muscle and bone.

"And that's you taken care of," Peter says merrily, leaping down from a tree, eyes gleaming as he pushes the blade deeper into Will. "Now my hero is free to get my apples without you interfering. Good-bye, Will."

“Ladon,” Will whispers, thinking of the many scars the dragon already bears. “Ladon – ”

And Will reaches, deep, deep, deep down, to the roots of the grass and the crust of the earth and the great sea boiling beneath the garden, and thinks, *Ladon, WAKE!*

In the distance, the earth shakes from the power of an enormous roar, and Will smiles.

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Will wakes up to find a dragon head insistently nudging his aching head.

“Ladon,” Will murmurs dazedly.

A great purr emanates from all around him, and Will opens his eyes long enough to see that Ladon is curled all around him, tail and heads and body and all, before he realizes that in fact he’s nowhere near the tree of golden apples.

Ladon is not near the tree.

“Ladon, you can’t!” Will says.

The dragon snarls. Or, at least, some of his heads snarl. Others just continuing whining and nudging him. And one head, the largest of them, drops a slightly bruised yellow apple onto Will’s chest.

A golden apple.

*Eat*, the dragon says.

“I can’t. I swore a vow – you swore a vow,” Will points out, wheezing.

*EAT.*

Will eats.

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Hera, after hearing his story, releases him from his vow. “I can’t keep you here any longer anyways,” Hera says wistfully. “You’re an immortal in your own right now. You’re free to interfere or not interfere as you wish.”

“And Ladon?”

“Ladon does as he wills. He serves me because he wishes to, not because I ordered it. If he judged you worthy of an apple, then that was his call to make.”

Will bows. “Thank you, my queen.”

“Go with my favor,” Hera tells him, eyes glowing with a goddess’s power. “But be careful. You’ll find the world has changed greatly in the centuries of your absence. And not always in ways for the better, you’ll find.”

Will simply picks a direction and starts walking. He just wants to be alone, for a little while.

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Hera visits Ladon immediately afterward. The great dragon has returned to curl around the tree, but only half of its heads are focused on that task. The others are pointed unerringly in the direction Will has taken away from the Garden of the Hesperides.

“Am I to lose you too?” Hera asks sadly.

The dragon snorts. *He was a human I have not seen the likes of in many millennia past*, the dragon says. *I will miss him*.

“He changed you,” Hera says, because the Ladon she knew would never have left the tree, no matter what was at stake. He was born to guard the tree, and he’s quite proud of his abilities. “And you changed him. Was the apple necessary?”

*If it was not, I would have killed him myself to spare him the pain, and eaten his flesh to carry me through the centuries*, the dragon replies.

“I suppose there are other Ladons,” Hera muses.

The dragon’s eyes twinkle. *Yes, there are. But only one Will Graham*.

“Then go,” Hera says with a sigh. “Go with my favor as well. I hope that you find him and are happy, Hannibal.”

Hannibal, one of the last of the great Ladon dragons, touches her briefly in respect with his snout, but then he takes off with a whirl of golden scales, climbing high into the sky with his great wings, and Hera loses sight of him after a minute. She knows she’ll see him again, but still, she mourns, just a little. Hannibal and Will had been a lovely story.

Pity Aphrodite has now taken an undue interest in their lives.

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## EPILOGUE

“I had heard that Ladon was dead,” Will says, staring at Hannibal’s golden wings as he bears them away from the cliff, not seeming to be bothered by Will’s weight. “I mourned for you for centuries, Hannibal, I even begged Hera to let me see you again!”

“Ladon is the name of my species, not my true name,” Hannibal replies. “I’m sure one of my cousins fell to a hero eventually.”

“And you . . . you spent all this time, all these lives, just looking for me?”

“Of course. I gave you life, Will. I plucked an apple from the tree, an act I was sworn never to do, and then I saved your life with it. Your life was mine from that day forwards. I would have followed you into Tartarus and treated with Hades himself to get you back, if that was necessary.”

“It might have been,” Will says, touching his belly where a faded scar rests. “You nearly killed me.”

“I was angry,” Hannibal admits. “You rejected me and you failed to see me for the first time. I thought to provoke you to remember me.”

“ . . . You could have just told me.”

Hannibal is silent for a long, long moment, long enough that the sun starts to rise over the waters as Hannibal alights onto a small island, shedding his human skin for his dragon one and immediately beginning to lick at Will’s wounds. Dragon saliva burns even against immortal skin, but Will allows it, because he knows from experience how powerful of a healing agent it can be.

“I was afraid,” Hannibal says eventually. “I was afraid you had forgotten me.”

“Oh, Hannibal,” Will says. “How could I ever have forgotten you?”

Hannibal purrs, a tune of a hundred heads rumbling in rhythm, and that’s how Hera finds them, tangled together with Will’s face buried in the coils of Hannibal’s many heads, when she comes to marry them.

FINIS

## Chapter End Notes

Join me tomorrow for Day 26: "Wendigo"! It will involve gods, mistaken identities, and Hannibal tying Will up. Not Greek mythology gods, though, I don't want to repeat stuff too much. See you then!

Also wow this ficlet was way more dramatic than I originally planned. Originally it was supposed to just be Will the Hesperides making friends with Hannibal the dragon. And then like . . . drama happened. Oops. Also if your name is Peter, I mean no slight against you; I just randomly chose some names, I have nothing against anyone named Peter. Peter Pevensie is one of my favorite fictional characters, in fact.

Finally, my sincere and utmost gratitude to DaringD for pointing out my big typo last chapter. I blame my sleep craving midnight mind. But seriously thank you :D

# Wendigo

## Chapter Summary

The second Will puts Hannibal's food in his mouth, he immediately knows that he's eating human flesh.

## Chapter Notes

Warnings: Hannibal is Not A Nice Person, forced orgasm, forced eating human flesh, plus the entire situation kinda reeks of dubious consent bordering on nonconsent. There is no rape or sexual assault, but be aware that Hannibal is forcing Will to do things he wouldn't normally do, and with magic and coercion to boot

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The first time Will puts Hannibal's food in his mouth, he immediately knows exactly what he's eating.

After all, mortals to sacrifice human flesh to all gods in the distant past, regardless of who the god or goddess was or their preferences. Will, whose temples became havens for the outcasts and the strays of all walks of life, never demanded human flesh, but like all gods, he still could gain a burst of power from it. He's tasted every kind of offering there is, given how diverse his worshippers could be.

And he knows exactly what human girl tastes like.

And, well, he had had some suspicions that maybe the Chesapeake Ripper wasn't quite human, but now that he has confirmation, Will sees no reason to pause. He will find no trouble in shedding the Will Graham skin for another, and although he's not the most powerful god, he's outlived and outsmarted many in his time.

Besides, to Will's true sight, Hannibal looks more akin to a wendigo than a god. And Will hasn't forgotten how to shed blood.

That is why the second Hannibal looks down at his own helping of people-sausage, eyes off Will for a split second, Will pushes off his chair and flips over to land behind the wendigo, a blade of pure silver and gold sliding into his hand as he plunges it deep into Hannibal's stomach.

“That,” Will hisses as Hannibal stiffens, blood pouring from his stomach, “is for trying to serve human flesh to a god, wendigo.”

For a long moment, Hannibal says nothing.

Then, quite suddenly, the wendigo *laughs*, loud and long, and Will freezes in surprise.

“Well, aren’t you full of surprises, Will Graham,” Hannibal says, and stands up, smoothly removing Will’s hand from his blade and turning to survey Will with a faint expression of delight mingled with surprise.

Which is when Will realizes that he’s actually frozen. And not out of shock. He actually cannot move a single inch, frozen crouched over Hannibal’s chair, and when Will rolls his eyes to the side, he can see leaves and the wind frozen as well. Hannibal’s not just frozen Will. Hannibal’s actually stopped time itself, something only the most powerful and oldest of the immortals can do, which means –

Hannibal takes the blade out and lets it clatter to the floor. “I must say,” Hannibal says conversationally, “I have never been accused of being a wendigo before. I applaud your reaction, even if your power is shockingly low. That blade might have killed a wendigo, but it’s nowhere near as strong as you should be, given how many gods you’ve survived. Still . . . it is somewhat heartening to know that some of us did survive the wars.”

Before Will can even try to break out, Hannibal is reaching straight through his human skin, right to the very heart where all of his power rests, communion between gods on the purest level in a way Will hasn’t done it ages, and Will screams from the agony of ill-used pathways burning to life anew.

“Oh, you have done some truly interesting things indeed,” Hannibal murmurs in delight. “You may not have taken an official side in the wars, but my, my, you did not shy away from your share of god-killing.”

“Get. Out. Of. My. Head,” Will forces out, still caught in Hannibal’s web.

Hannibal cocks his head. “Leave? No. No, I don’t think so.”

He does break the connection though, and time restarts just in time for Will to fall into a gasping heap at Hannibal’s feet, unable to do anything but pant and whine helplessly when Hannibal grasps his hair and tilts his face upright, his eyes already glowing the unnatural incandescent maroon of a god. For Will it’s like being born all again, when he emerged from creation new and shiny and never having felt the sting of pain in his life.

“No, Will,” Hannibal says, making a complex gesture that takes Will’s breath away, “I’m not finished with you just yet.”

Will passes out, and his last sensation is of dread. If there’s one thing that was ever true, it was that the oldest of the gods could be as cruel to younger gods as they were to the humans they regarded as pawns, and Will knows exactly what Hannibal is capable of doing to humans.

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Will wakes up cold, alone, and bound so powerfully that he stinks of Hannibal's magic. What little wriggles he can do are nothing next to the power of the sigils Hannibal's engraved upon the bindings that enclose his wrists, his ankles, and his neck, symbols and spells so ancient they're older than Will himself and certainly older than any of the other gods Will has clashed with and defeated. What little Will can make out are the standard enchantments gods used to lay down on humans they plucked up as favored slaves: obedience, silence, boundaries, pain, pleasure.

Basically, Will can't run away, he can't outright disobey an order, he can't tell anyone what's happened, and perhaps worst of all, Hannibal gets a direct line into his pain and pleasure centers. And since Will is a god, Hannibal could cause enough pain to kill a human and still leave Will alive and semi-functional.

And even worse than that is that that's only a very small minority of the spells Will can figure. There are a great deal more he simply fails to recognize.

"Such dark thoughts your mind leaps to," Hannibal chides, stepping into the room from a portal with the nonchalance of a god. "And here I thought the god of outcasts and strays was a god of hope."

Will glares and then finds, to his great relief, that he can talk again. "You've got me stuck to the floor with slave bindings," he snarls.

Hannibal's eyebrow goes up so fast it's almost funny. "Slave bindings?" he repeats. "These were the bindings we used on companions, not slaves. Women and men who willingly chose to stand by our thrones and serve us."

"Yeah, the fact that I can't move screams of willingness."

"My apologies." Hannibal flicks a hand, and a great pressure lifts off of Will, leaving him free to curl up against the piercing stare of Hannibal's power. "I did not want you to try and harm yourself through any foolish attempts to remove the bindings."

"I'm not that stupid," Will says, although in all fairness that was going to be his next move. "I can't remove these short of death."

"You will find that, as of right now, death is out of your reach, my dear," Hannibal says, tone sweet with fake sympathy. "I can't have the last godling I meet destroy themselves simply to deny me the pleasure of their company, now can I? It would do terrible things to my reputation."

Will sighs. Hannibal's got him so tightly Will has no cards left to play. His last resorts are to try and escape, try and kill Hannibal, or end his own existence, and the bindings prevent all of those rather effectively.

"What do you want from me, Hannibal?" Will asks wearily.

“As I said,” Hannibal replies, “I want the pleasure of your company. It’s been so long since the last time I crossed paths with a fellow immortal.”

“I could have gone on for a lot longer.”

“Perhaps you could have. But you found me.”

“If I’d done it right, I would have absorbed you and you wouldn’t have been able to stop me,” Will spits, because it’s only really difficult, not impossible, to end the existence of a god older than yourself. Will’s seen it done before, although usually it also causes a massive explosion of destruction.

Hannibal hums. “No, I do not think so. I was one of the first to emerge from creation, Will. You could not safely absorb my power without dying yourself or destroying half of this country when the power you could not absorb escaped your grasp. All of those humans you cherish, destroyed in an instant.”

“You’re doing a fine job of killing them all yourself as you are.”

“One must feed,” Hannibal says with a shrug. “I imagine that that is why you are so shockingly weak, Will. When is the last time you fed properly?”

Will just closes his eyes. He stopped eating human flesh the first time he walked among humans and saw them as people, long before man discovered fire. He sustains his power from the land and what few worshippers still pray to him, even by accident, but he’s certain Hannibal won’t like that answer.

“Answer me, Will.”

“Or what? You can’t kill me, you said so yourself.”

“Is it truly such a difficult question to answer?”

“Fine,” Will snaps, sending little sparks of fire off around him in his anger. Hannibal hasn’t entirely restricted access to his power, and damn it, he’s going to use it as much as he can. “I haven’t fed ‘properly’ since the first time mortals found fire. Happy?”

Hannibal doesn’t answer. He merely walks forward until he can kneel right in front of Will, somehow more terrifying in the pity he shows now than the gleeful malice he had shown as he stopped time and bound Will.

“No, not happy,” Hannibal says. “But I also believe in the idea of . . . positive reinforcement, shall we say.”

One gesture of Hannibal’s hand, and a series of sigils light up around the binding on Will’s neck, and Will starts to ask what’s going on when he suddenly finds himself wracked with pleasure, waves upon waves upon endless waves of it splashing against the very core of who he is, so much that he can feel himself spasm helplessly as Hannibal encloses him in his arms, sharp teeth bared in a grin, to stop him from smashing through the floor with his strength. It builds so quick that Will falls over the edge before he can even process that he’s

near it, and it leaves Will shaken to the core, shivering and whimpering in Hannibal's embrace.

"There now, my darling," Hannibal whispers. "That was not so bad, was it? You just need to regain your strength. And I think I have just the food to get you started."

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Will crosses his arms. "Absolutely not."

Hannibal nudges the plate closer, an uncompromising frown on his face. "You are weak," Hannibal repeats, sounding surprisingly irritated for a millennia old god. "You need to feed, and feed properly."

"I am not eating human flesh."

Hannibal looks at him for a long, long moment. He could order Will to eat, and the bindings would force Will to do so, but that's not quite how a god eats. Will could just as easily refuse to take the power that comes from the offering, and the flesh would simply be burned into nothingness as it passed through his system. For Hannibal to truly feed him, he'd have to be incredibly specific about his order, and Will knows that Hannibal would find it both incredibly annoying and incredibly beneath him.

"Very well," Hannibal sighs and stands up. "I see we'll have to do this the old-fashioned way."

"What?"

Hannibal blinks out of existence, and then returns with a struggling human teenager, gagged and bound and screaming in fury. Hannibal lays him out on the table and conjures his own knife, resting it pointedly against the boy's breastbone, as old symbols carve themselves in a circle around him.

"You can eat the flesh I've already gathered," Hannibal says calmly, ignoring the way Will is squirming against the bindings keeping him from interfering, "or I can sacrifice to you in the old ways. Your choice."

"You bastard," Will snarls.

"Your choice," Hannibal reiterates. "But I will not say I won't enjoy spilling human blood again."

Will stabs a fork into the sausage. Takes a bite. Closes his eyes and shudders as old power floods him again, in a way he hasn't felt since he was very young.

When he opens his eyes again, the human teenager is gone, and Hannibal is standing in front of him, knife tucked away, wiping away the tears of ichor that Will is shedding as he slowly cuts apart more human sausage and places it piece by piece into his mouth.

"Don't cry, my godling," Hannibal murmurs, kissing the tears away. "I will never let you starve."

“I hate you,” Will says.

“As long as you are alive to hate me.”

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After Will consumes enough meat that Hannibal judges him sufficiently started on the path to recovery, they return to the motel, only having wasted an hour. Time flows different under the power of a god like Hannibal, especially in his own realm.

“What did you tell Jack?”

Hannibal packs up his traveling bag of cooked human. “That we were delayed due to a miscommunication at the hotel. I went to the wrong one, and you were obviously not there, so it took some time to sort it out.”

“You are terrible at making human excuses.”

“Yet it seems to have passed muster.”

“Oh shut up.”

To Will’s unending horror, his newfound return to power leaves him entirely able to track down the Minnesota Shrike based on the stench of murderer that still lingers on the premises, meaning that he spends the entire car ride to the Shrike’s home base alternately ignoring Hannibal’s smug remarks about his “beautiful abilities” and Hannibal’s complaining about “why can we not simply teleport”.

This weird dichotomy of smugness and annoyance is probably why Will fails to realize just how badly everything’s gone wrong until Louise Hobbs is dead, Garret Jacob Hobbs is dying in front of him from the force of Will’s godly fury, and Abigail Hobbs is bleeding out from under him.

Hannibal, the bastard, just stands in the doorway, and Will can *feel* the way he tastes the scent of human blood in the air.

“Stop bathing in your worship and get over here,” Will snaps.

“You do look lovely in human blood,” Hannibal says.

“Help me save her!”

“Why should I do that? She is one mortal girl in a lone line of mortals. You have failed to save many before, and you will fail to save many after.”

Will lashes out before he can stop himself, a physical blow that sends Hannibal careening into the wall, fire licking at his pristine suit. “We were put here to *help* humans, not rule them,” Will spits, and he knows he’s probably got sparks coming off of him, but he hasn’t been this powerful in a long time, and it’s not like the dying Abigail Hobbs is going to tell anyone. “If you don’t, I swear to our Creator I’ll kill you myself and resurrect her with what’s left of you.”

Hannibal gives him a slow smile. “That is more like it,” he says.

He bends down and removes Will’s trembling hands from the gaping tear in Abigail’s throat, and for a single second, Will can see his true form in all its glory, a creature of darkness and rage and curiosity, crowned with antlers of human bone and blood and beset with eyes the color of amethysts, and he’s so stark in his darkness that even Will flinches from the power Hannibal can bring to bear. The creature that is Hannibal coughs, just slightly, and a single golden drop of ichor falls from his mouth to land on the tear on Abigail’s throat.

Abigail Hobbs breathes again, gasping, just as the EMTs break down the door.

---

Later on, cloaked in darkness, Will watches Abigail be tended to in the hospital from a scrying mirror in Hannibal’s house. Even from such a distance, Will can feel the power radiating from her.

“Admiring your reflection?” Hannibal inquires idly from where he’s chopping up some wine sommelier who insulted him.

“Why did you make Abigail one of us?”

Hannibal’s knife stops mid-slice. He sighs, a strangely human sound, and places it aside, wiping his hands clean of the mess on his apron, which instantly returns to pristine condition as his powers wipe away the viscera.

“I sought to preserve your life through force,” Hannibal admits. “If not by offering you an unbearable choice, then by sacrificing humans to you upon the old altars. But, alas, that is not how our kind works. You have killed many other gods, Will, in your defense of humanity. Eventually, even my power would waver, and you would break free of your bonds and immediately attempt to starve yourself, and we would be back exactly as we started. You, my dear, are motivated not by fear, but my connection. You crave it. So I gave you a new reason to live.”

Will gapes at him. “You created,” he says slowly, “a whole new god to walk this earth, just to ensure I wouldn’t go off myself the second I was free?”

“Well. It will work.”

Will throws a lightning bolt at him; Hannibal sidesteps it neatly and hides a smile when the bindings make a cursing Will go retrieve a mop to clean up the after effects.

Because, quite unfortunately, Hannibal is right.

Will can’t let himself die now. He has to look after Abigail. Becoming a god is not an easy process, and burning a newly born god at the stake – metaphorically or literally – can have devastating consequences when that god lets loose with their fury and confusion and fear.

“You’re fostering codependence,” Will realizes.

“Is that what I am doing?”

“You know as well as I do that I can’t raise Abigail alone. New gods run wild.” Even Will, weak and young as he was, had been tended to faithfully by two older gods, who’d caged his impulsive streaks and taught him how to fix the damage he’d wrought. And Abigail is the creation of Hannibal; in time, she could easily surpass Will in the depth of her power.

“And your point is?”

Will closes his eyes. “I need you. I need your help. I need you to help me with Abigail.”

“All you need to do,” Hannibal says serenely, “is ask.”

*Hannibal*, Will says, in his true voice, watching the way the older god freezes on instinct, his true self seeping through the little holes in his person self. Will smiles and lets his true self shine through, his own fur and wings and eyes gold as the sun. *Hannibal, please help me?*

“My darling Will,” Hannibal says, adoration in his amethyst eyes, “how could I possibly refuse one such as you?”

FINIS

## Chapter End Notes

Join me tomorrow for Day 27: "Invisible"! To all of you who gave your opinions on what Hogwarts House Hannibal characters would be in, tomorrow will be the payoff to your contributions. AKA I'm doing a Hogwarts AU, everyone. See you then!

What was that I said about fluffy stuff from here on out? CLEARLY I LIED. Also, thank you, Hannibal, you prick, for making this so much darker than I originally wanted it to be. . .

# Invisible

## Chapter Summary

When Will is hexed invisible, the last thing he expects is for Prefect Hannibal Lecter to look up and say, "I know you're there. I can smell you."

## Chapter Notes

Warnings: overdose of fluff, I guess

There was supposed to be a plot in this story. Um. It didn't happen.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

To say that Will's day is currently going badly is probably the worst understatement of Will's entire life.

First, he woke up so early from nerves that he lay paralyzed in bed until he started frantically reviewing his textbooks, which caused him to fall asleep and sleep so deeply that he missed breakfast. Which also meant that he was late to his first class. Which meant that he was such in a hurry that he was easy pickings for the bullies who tripped him. Which meant that he didn't expect to go suddenly flying down the stairs, and therefore broke his wand.

Which means that Will is now sitting at the bottom of the grand staircase, head dizzy and heart racing, and he sits up only to find himself under both a disillusionment charm and a silencing charm with a broken, useless wand.

His attempts to get help don't go much better. The first teacher he meets doesn't even notice him, what few friends he does have dismiss his silent demonstrations as a not funny Peeves prank, and to be honest, after half a day of wandering around and being pelted by objects as students automatically assume he's a pranking ghost, Will's rather lost any desire to seek help.

Lost in thought, Will finds that his feet carry him straight to his favorite alcove in the library, a small cozy room with a fire and arranged in such a way that one can easily sink into the cushions and not be easily seen.

Unfortunately, Will also finds that someone else is already there.

It's one of the Ravenclaw prefects, going by the badge on his robes, but Will isn't terribly familiar with Hannibal Lecter even though they're in the same house. Mostly this is because Hannibal is a sixth year and Will is a third year, so Hannibal wasn't a prefect the year Will came to Hogwarts and their activities rarely line up. In any case, all Will knows about Hannibal is gossip.

Half of it is good, and half of it is . . . not so good.

For the good part, Will's heard plenty of rumors that Verger is terrified of Hannibal, even though Hannibal is both an orphan and not nearly as rich as "blood pure" Verger. Considering Will is a mute invisible ghost right now, hiding in an alcove with someone that his main tormentor is terrified of is a good thing.

However, the rumors are not so clear on what exactly Hannibal did to Verger. Some say all he did was help Alana Bloom of Gryffindor and Margot Verger of Slytherin get together. Other people say that Hannibal hexed Verger so badly that he had a pig's face for a good month before the teachers figured out to reverse it. And still others say that he literally drinks human blood instead of pumpkin juice.

At the same time, though, Will's not in his best mindset. Right now, his only thought is to get away from Mason Verger, and given that Hannibal is slightly terrifying to Verger and probably can't see Will, Will's going to take this chance.

Silently, he picks his way to a squishy couch across from Hannibal and sinks down, curling up to enjoy the silence.

Until –

"You know," Hannibal Lecter says, not even looking up from the enormous book he's perusing, "if you are attempting to be stealthy, you are failing terribly."

Will blinks.

Hannibal looks up and looks straight at Will, like some psychic. "I can smell you."

Will shrugs, even though Hannibal can't see it. Nothing he can do if he stinks. He's pretty sure that any attempt to take a shower would only result in getting more objects lobbed at him if his fellow Ravenclaws thought a ghost had taken up residence in the showers.

"Hmm." Hannibal sets aside his quill. "Something tells me that this is not a willing silence. A failed spell then?"

Will closes his eyes and ignores him. He can't talk, so Hannibal can blather on all he likes. Hannibal could list every single spell in the spellbook and Will still wouldn't be able to talk back.

"No, not a failed spell. You would have gone to the hospital wing then. Someone would have noticed you there. A prank, then. Hmm."

Hannibal flicks his wand, and there's a strange rush over Will's face, like a breath of fresh air.

“What did you do?” Will says, and then falls off his chair when he realizes that Hannibal actually heard his voice.

There’s a flicker of smugness in Hannibal’s eyes, but it’s not the kind of arrogance that makes Will shiver and run away from Verger. It’s the kind of smugness that only comes when someone is absolutely dead set in their ways and knows they’re right, with bone-deep certainty that means they go all out for anything they want.

“A simple reversal,” Hannibal says. “Hello, Will.”

“Um . . .”

“Yes, I do know your name. We have to know everyone’s names. Besides, it’s not every Ravenclaw first year who attempts to bring a Cù Sith to Hogwarts as their pet.”

“There’s no rule against it,” Will says automatically, because he’s said so often that even Flitwick threw his hands up and let Winston live with Hagrid on the grounds after Will’s constant appeals and badgering.

Hannibal just looks at him. “You tamed a Cù Sith and expected Hogswarts to welcome it with open arms?”

“Winston is friendly. Just a bit . . . intense.” *Like you*, Will thinks.

Hannibal is silent for a moment. Then, abruptly, he says, “You’re not under an invisibility cloak, so I’m guessing it’s a Disillusionment Charm. One moment.”

“One moment to – hey!” Will exclaims, scooting away as Hannibal approaches like with a faint expression of doom on his face, wand raised menacingly in hand. “What are you doing? Hannibal, what – Hannibal!”

Hannibal seizes his robe, says, “Stop *squirming*, Will,” and then raps his wand hard on Will’s head, like he’s trying to knock Will out.

Will feels the telltale wet drip down his back, and to his relief when he looks down he can actually see his hands. And his feet. And his torso. And all of him, really, even though it looks like he’s also got a lot of splashed ink on his robes from when he took his fall down the grand staircase, which would explain both why Hannibal complained about his smell and why Mason sniggered so much between casting his spells.

“Mason Verger?” Hannibal says mildly.

“He’s . . . weird about me,” Will explains awkwardly. He’s not quite sure how to say that Verger finds him cute without sounding crazy.

“Mason likes to be in control,” Hannibal says quietly. “You are a younger student. He feels a great sense of satisfaction at the idea that you are beneath him and at his mercy, both in terms of the fact that he is prefect and that he has a greater awareness of humiliating spells than you do.”

Will looks into Hannibal's eyes, and sees only annoyance. Hannibal doesn't like Verger, but it's the kind of dislike one has for an ant; he's so far beneath Hannibal's notice that he doesn't even warrant a passing thought, beyond the fact that he exists and isn't doing what Hannibal wants him to be doing – which is to be far, far, far away.

“Is that why you helped Margot?” Will asks.

Hannibal laughs. “Margot helped herself. I merely . . . encouraged her.”

“She turned Mason's face into a pig?”

“It was a brilliant bit of spellwork, if I do say so myself.”

“Could you teach me?” Will asks, because it really does sound interesting. Even if he has no intention of using it.

Hannibal cocks his head, and then looks at him up and down, and for the first time Will feels like he's being evaluated more on his merits than on the lackluster and patchy appearance of his robes and haphazard flyaway curls that make up his hair.

“I can try,” Hannibal answers eventually. “But first you are going to need a new wand.”

---

Against Will's protests, Hannibal goes to Flitwick and both gets Verger into detention and gets special permission to drag Will to Diagon Alley to purchase a new wand. After Will finds one, Hannibal also takes the liberty of paying whilst Will's back is turned, and then disrupting Will's second protest by seizing him and Apparating him back to Hogsmeade with an irritated huff.

Will, thankfully, doesn't have much food in his stomach when he vomits due to the disorientation.

Unfortunately, Hannibal takes this as a sign that Will is “criminally underfed”, and proceeds to drag Will to his private chambers in Ravenclaw tower – a prefect thing, he claims, which is a blatant and total lie by Will's reading – to cook him a homemade meal and practically sit on him until he eats.

Will's too shy to say it's the best thing he's ever eaten, but judging by the way Hannibal swells with pride, he doesn't need to.

---

A week later, Will realizes that eating Hannibal's food was like accepting a faerie gift, because Hannibal takes it as a symbol to practically adopt him. He constantly slips Will snacks, pops up randomly to make Verger squeak and flee in the other direction, and even starts patching Will's robes behind his back with magic. When Will brings him to see Winston in hopes of finally seeing Hannibal's calm façade crack, the bastard brings Winston homemade sausages and turns the great black dog into a rolling, playful puppy as Will stares in disbelief.

When Will complains to Alana and Margot, they laugh.

“Hannibal takes a special interest in certain . . . projects, shall we say,” Margot explains, giggling as Alana kisses her on the cheek again. She’s come a long way from the shy, cowering girl Will first met on the Hogwarts train. Now Verger won’t even look at her, and she glows with happiness and pride whenever she’s with Alana.

“And I’m his new pet?”

“Honey, get used to it. The food is totally worth it.”

“Are you saying I need to brush up on my cooking skills?” Alana demands.

“Alana, I’m saying that you burned water.”

“I did not!”

“Okay, so I may have distracted you. Just a little.”

“Aaaand I’m gone,” Will says hastily, as they turn their attention to kissing again. “Bye, thanks, see you later!”

Their laughter chases Will out of the room.

---

Still, even being Hannibal’s self-proclaimed project isn’t too terrible. Hannibal is incredibly clever and willing to answer any of Will’s numerous questions no matter the time of day. His food is good and tasty, and he never even blinks at Will’s weird habits. When they go to Hogsmeade, Hannibal shows him interesting shops and treats him to new foods to “expand his palate”.

And best of all, the next time Verger finally does work up the courage to jump Will in the library, he ends up on the floor, squealing like a pig.

“Well done,” Hannibal says, leaping down from the ladder like a cat. He’d only gone up for a few minutes to get some book to show Will, but his appearance is still enough to send Verger fleeing for the exit, squealing and squeaking the whole way.

Will blushes. “I didn’t think it’d work.”

“Of course it would have. I have utter confidence in your abilities.”

“Seriously?”

Hannibal just gives him a look, and then, to make matters even more confusing, leans in to kiss him, sweet and soft, before he walks off like he didn’t just kiss the one weirdo in all Ravenclaw that no one wants to be friends with, never mind date.

“Did you just kiss me?”

“I did not invite you to the Three Broomsticks just to drink disgustingly sweet confections, Will.”

“ . . . You wanted to kiss butterbeer off my lips?”

“No – Will – just come here, you,” Hannibal says and drags him closer, this time giving Will enough warning to actually kiss him back.

They kiss long enough that little Colin Creevy gets a photo of it and it’s published in the school newspaper. Will generally finds himself hiding at the edges of the photo, but Hannibal smiles with sharp shark teeth and usually manages to lure photo-Will out for a good kissing session every now and then, sprawled against the luxurious cushions of the library.

Best of all, Hannibal always feels like he has to one-up his photo-self and always indulges Will in a rather enjoyable make-out session whenever he sees it happen in the photo.

FINIS

## Chapter End Notes

Join me tomorrow for Day 28, for which the prompt was "Tarot Cards"! I don't have a concrete idea for this, but it may involve another animal!Hannibal AU. Or it may involve cheap circus tricks, I'm not sure yet. See you then!

# Tarot Cards

## Chapter Summary

Will is a prince who has the job of rescuing the princess and killing the fearsome creature guarding her. Too bad that the princess doesn't need rescuing and the creature is utterly besotted with Will.

## Chapter Notes

Warnings: minor description of people being brutally killed

I . . . honestly have no idea what this is. I feel like all the plot that should have gone into yesterday's fic crept into here. Legitimately my original idea was for a fun little medieval romp with Will, some tarot cards, and an animal!Hannibal. And now it's like a fscking space opera with reincarnation and backstory and stuff. What the fsck.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“Are they taking photographs?”

At the sound of Beverly’s indignant voice, Will looks sideways from where he’s carefully flipped up his hood to conceal his face. Most of the others traveling with him are proudly riding in with bare heads, to allow for the sparkling sun to cascade over the luxurious jeweled crowns they wear. Even from here, at the far back of the pack, Will can easily spot the blood-red rubies that are inset in the crown of the prince of War and the sea-blue sapphires that gleam off of the prince of Ocean.

Will has a crown too, but he is the seventh son. There is nothing truly spectacular about his position, considering that Messenger is the smallest of the nine planets, so no one scolds him for hiding his face.

Beverly, who is a princess in her own right, flips her own hood up. “I cannot believe they’re taking photographs like this is some kind of coming out party,” she grumbles.

“Bev,” Will says, “no one has managed to rescue the crown princess of Death in over one hundred years. Of course they’re going to take photographs. You know how many princes and princess have died trying to get past the guardian?”

When humanity spread from Earth to the remaining eight planets, many of the greatest houses became dynasties of their own planets. The Vergers settled on Lightning, and over the

years they went from one of the most humble houses to one of the most arrogant kingdoms. Unfortunately, their planet is rich in the resources to back up most of that arrogance. The Blooms, on the other hand, picked Death, one of the coldest and farthest planets, and for the most part they did rather well, until a “space curse” wiped out most of the family. Princess Alana was the sole survivor, but when she stepped up to take the throne, Mason Verger challenged her, saying that since he had once courted her, ownership of Death fell to him and not her.

No one’s quite sure what happened, since Verger and Alana are the only witnesses to what happened next, but in the end, a fearsome guardian removed Alana and installed her back on Death. The guardian has killed or destroyed every single champion Mason has sent to recover her, and since Alana has made no efforts to escape, Mason’s only recourse is to keep sending champions.

Nowadays, it’s almost a joke. But given that there are only so many planets and space travel to other solar systems takes a long, long, long time, many princes and princesses who aren’t in the immediate line of succession often take up Mason’s offer to rescue Alana in return for a share in his immense space travel empire.

It’s the reason Will and Beverly are here, after all. If they die or win, it will cause no ill effect on their families. If they die, they are removed from challenging the crown princes and princesses, and if they win, they bring glory to the house.

And right now, given that that annual championship is opening, the entire solar system press is here to shove cameras in their faces.

“Doesn’t Verger have a counter somewhere of all the champions who’ve died?” Beverly asks, making one reporter squawk in dismay and flee to a better candidate for interviews.

“Probably. It sounds like something he would do.”

Finally, they ride into the main courtyard. The most powerful and rich houses mostly remain in their carriages and on their mounts, but Will and the other lessers dismount and stand in formation, an entire courtyard full of those willing or foolhardy or pressured enough into competing for a prince that isn’t theirs and a princess who, by all accounts, would rather be imprisoned her entire life by a fearsome guardian than remerge into society.

“Welcome to Lightning!” Prince Mason Verger announces with a fake smile, appearing on the holoscreens like a bad jump scare. “I thank you for answering the call, as so many of you do every year, to rescue my beloved and most beautiful Alana. I shall find time to meet you all and get to know you, and whomsoever of you succeeds in this most precious of tasks shall find themselves rewarded beyond their wildest dreams. But first – first you must prove yourselves. So, let the championships begin!”

---

The first round of elimination is not glamorous at all. It’s the signing of a waiver, actually, ensuring that no one will try to declare war on Lightning for sending someone on a suicide quest. Will sees many people turn right back around and leave after reading the hundreds of

pages of fine print detailing exactly how the guardian has managed to kill previous champions.

“Fried, deboned, boiled, strangled, eaten alive, drowned alive, lungs removed while alive, bled to death – ” Will flips another page over. “Wow, there’s still more?”

His droid intake assistant is unsympathetic. “Sign on the dotted line please.”

Will is about to sign, finally, when he gets to the very last section, titled: “What We Know About The Guardian”. It literally has one sentence, and the sentence isn’t very encouraging: It feeds off of human flesh and fear.

“Is this a guardian or a magical space wraith?”

“Sign on the dotted line please.”

“You’re not going to any help at all, are you?”

“Sign on the dotted line, please.”

“Seriously, that’s all Verger’s been able to find out about the Guardian in one hundred years?”

“Sign on the dotted line please.”

Will signs.

---

Somehow, Verger manages to house the hundreds who are still left. Will doesn’t get the most glamorous room, but the bed is comfortable, the food is good, and the door locks. It’s better than his usual accommodations.

He still has nightmares, but he’s been having the nightmares as long as he’s been alive, so they don’t trouble him.

They’re all the same anyways, always a variation of Will running through a forest chased by a figure on four legs. Sometimes he’s laughing and sometimes he’s crying, but the creature never wavers in his chase, and Will’s dream always ends right as the creature catches him, so that he never quite gets a good look at its face.

It always says the same thing to him, though: *My Will, how long I have waited for you.*

---

The next day is more testing, more papers to sign, and more walking around Verger’s enormous palace with overly cheerful robot guides. Will is deemed passable in his skills with both archaic and space weaponry, although his tester for vehicle maneuvers says he’s one of the best. All in all, not the most outstanding candidate, but Verger can’t be picky when he’s spent a hundred years failing to rescue one person.

The third day is actual combat, facing off against feral beasts like space spiders and meteor dragons. They lose half the candidates to those fights alone, either when the candidates do

something stupid and get eaten or when the candidates run screaming from the arena.

Will stays where he is the ranking, although Beverly goes to town on her opponent – a venomous asteroid snake – and moves up pretty high.

“See, you’re going to win it and really make Verger look bad,” Will says cheerfully.

“Or maybe you’re going to win it, Mr-I-Can-Talk-To-Dragons.”

“One time thing, I swear.”

Meteor dragons aren’t the most uncommon things on Messenger. Will’s met so many that he’s got the ritual down pat. And to be fair, it does involve a lot of talking, but the dragons read your body language and your intent, not what you’re actually saying. Will could say “I want to bathe in your blood” but as long as he was calm, the dragon would eventually calm down too. It’s a tradition the Graham Dynasty has always taught its children.

“When do you think we’re going to meet actual Verger?” Beverly whispers as they’re sent off, bleeding and aching and covered in viscera, to dinner.

“Whenever we’re in double digits, I bet.”

---

By the end of the week, they are indeed down to double digits, a party of only 28 champions who are still willing or alive enough to declare they are still going forward. And of course, that is when Verger finally shows himself.

It’s . . . not overwhelming.

The rulers at the top of the food chain of every dynasty generally have regular deaging sessions to preserve their immortal youth and extend their lifespan, and it’s clear Verger has enjoyed these privileges. What is also clear is that something terrible has happened to his face, something beyond what deaging can regenerate, so that he has a quivering smile, a lopsided shoulder, and one fake bionic eye that still looks incredibly fake despite all the money probably spent on making it so realistic.

To cap it all, Verger doesn’t even know any of their names, and spends a lot of time articulating his longing for his “beloved Alana”.

Will dozes off right in the middle of it and doesn’t even feel bad about it.

He’s woken up by Beverly at the very end, when the Princess Margot – fake smile, badly covered up bruise, and dragging limp – hands out their beacons and callsigns. They’ll work as a group to attack, but the beacon will be a last resort, a short teleporter jump that will get them back on the support ship if they decide to pull out.

For some reason, Verger’s chosen to base the beacons off of tarot cards.

Will gets The Tower, symbolizing the collapse of sudden structure and sudden insight. Given the way encephalitis nearly consumed his life and the realization that his nightmares were

causing his sleepwalking was the thing that saved him, he's figures it's a pretty good match.

Beverly gets The Hanged Man, which causes a scoff and a rolled eye.

Others get the Devil, the Moon, Temperance, Death, and more, until everyone has a callsign and a beacon. It is only then they are introduced to General Hannibal Lecter, who is going to be leading the mission. He has never done it before, but that's mostly because the previous general met an untimely end when Verger had gotten annoyed one day, so Will can't hold his inexperience against him.

Either way, General Lecter announces they are going to take off in one day, so they have twelve hours to pack and beam up or leave, and after that it's a mad dash to gather everything and get to the rendezvous.

---

"Will Graham, prince of Messenger."

Will looks up to see General Lecter standing in his doorway, a pad in one hand and dressed already in full combat armor.

"I thought Prince Mason demanded we all go by callsigns," Will says.

Lecter sighs, a tiny shrug of annoyance. "Mason is simply growing . . . apathetic. He no longer wishes to learn who is sending to die. I find that a personal connection may boost survival chances."

"I just met you, and you think we can make a personal connection in twelve hours?"

"Are you calling me boring, princeling?"

"Maybe I just don't find you that interesting."

Lecter smiles, just a little bit. "I think you will. I do hope you survive your encounter with the Guardian, Prince William."

"What makes you think I'll even get that far?" Some champions are killed before they even reach the inner sanctum, falling prey to the traps and tricks of the creature that no one really knows anything about.

"Let's say I have a good feeling about you."

Will closes his pack. "Maybe your callsign should be 'the Oracle'. Good night, General Lecter."

"Good night, m – Prince Will," Lecter says, and leaves.

---

All the good feelings in the universe don't really help much. One by one, the champions fall to traps or battles, and Will finds himself separated from the others halfway to the inner sanctum due to a shifting staircase that splits them into individual paths.

And that, of course, when the guardian appears.

At first, it doesn't look that intimidating. Just a slight shadow on the wall behind Will.

Then it reveals itself to be a fearsome ravenstag, like some mutated remnant of old Earth creatures in a horrifying mix, with eyes of burnt red and antlers of gold and a body of fur and feathers. Each step sends ringing through the room, and each breath is the sound of Will's nightmares.

"My Will," the guardian says.

"How – how do you know my name?"

The guardian tosses its head. "Do you really not remember me, my Will?"

Will thinks of his dreams, of a battlefield, dotted with fire and banners, and a cliff side, high above the water. He thinks of a thousand dreams of a four-legged creature, chasing and chasing and chasing, reaching out across space and time, always calling, over and over, until Will nearly broke from the pressure.

"No. I don't know you," Will says, and raises his sword. "Where is Alana?"

"Alana is my guest," the guardian says. "Just as you once were."

"What?"

Whatever the guardian says in answer is lost when a dark-haired woman in full armor emerges from a side door. She stops immediately when she sees Will, and the first thing Will thinks of is a woman from his dreams, the broken woman with tears of rain, who had always caused his many therapists to tell him to stop being afraid of women and get out and date some.

This, he knows at once, is Princess Alana.

So Will does the reasonable thing and triggers his beacon, because at least he can get out with Alana in tow away from this terrible monster who wants to drag Will down into the darkness that nearly ate him alive in his youth.

Only.

Only nothing happens.

"Yeah, those don't work," Alana says. "Verger always was a coward. He didn't care about your lives."

"So why –"

"My beloved! I am here at last, to save you!"

Will stares, full of confusion, as Verger materializes and raises his arms in pride. There is an entire platoon of soldiers with him, all of whom immediately split up to aim weapons at Will and the guardian, who snorts, and Will nearly gets himself killed when he jumps because he didn't realize just how close the ravenstag was to his back.

"Go away, Verger, or I'll kick your butt again like I did the last time," Alana threatens.

"But I am here to save you!"

"No, you're here because you're a prick with a pea brain and no stomach."

"You'll turn down my generous offer? Again?"

Alana fires a shot at him.

Verger's face changes, and between one blink and the next, he's holding a detonator with his thumb, one so strong that Will takes a step back on instinct. A class 10 detonator can take out an entire moon; an explosion in here would devastate Death for centuries to come. It would certainly be enough to destroy every single person in the room.

"How rude, Mason," says the guardian. "And here I thought you had finally learned your lesson."

"Shut up, you monster," Verger snarls. "You'll die too, for taking Alana's side and helping her maim me like this. Do you have any idea, what it's like, to live like this?! To know that everyone mocks you behind your back for a lost eye and a lopsided shoulder! Do you have any idea how terrible a life I've – "

A glowing blade emerges from Verger's back, and he topples over, dead. The detonator rolls from his lifeless hands, but Margot Verger steps forward from her brother's corpse to disable it with a satisfied huff.

"Not nearly as terrible of a life as it has been to listen to your whining," she tells her choking brother.

"Allow me," the ravenstag says, pushing past Will, and a single mighty stomp ends the days of Mason Verger, crown prince of Lightning.

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Later on, the real story comes out while Will stands there gaping like a confused idiot. It turns out that Alana *had* been engaged to someone in the Verger dynasty – only she had been engaged to Margot, not Mason. Mason had usurped his sister's position, causing Margot to try and kill him, and Mason had used that as justification to take her throne, resulting in Alana hiring Hannibal to interrupt everything with the vow that she'd release him once Margot managed to off Mason once and for all.

Unfortunately, Mason had very carefully never been alone and out of the sight of cameras with Margot again – until now.

“So, thanks for being my distraction,” Margot tells him. “Now, if you’ll excuse me, I have a planet to take back. Alana?”

“It is wonderful to see you again,” Alana says sincerely to Will, who’s never met her a day in his life, and then the teleporter beam takes them back up just in time for Will to see them kissing with the relief of the end of a hundred year wait.

Hannibal is warm when he presses against Will, huffing quietly, still in his enormous ravenstag form. Most of Mason’s guards had scrambled off, screaming, after Hannibal had dealt the final blow to Mason as irrefutable proof for Margot to take back her rightful place as the Verger heir, so now they’re all alone in the room with just the steady sound of Hannibal’s heartbeat in Will’s ears.

“Why did you take this contract?” Will asks. Hannibal’s fur is surprisingly soft, for one who has struck so much fear into a thousand champions.

Hannibal hums. “History has a tendency to repeat itself,” the great stag says. “Even if the details may vary. Alana Bloom was destined to cross paths with you one day, and I was determined to be there that day.”

“A hundred years though.” Will’s only half of that, and even he can’t imagine waiting twice his life over for a man who doesn’t even know him.

“I have waited for you for a hundred thousand lifetimes,” Hannibal says, like it’s nothing at all. “I would have waited far longer than one hundred years, just to meet you again. Besides . . . Alana Bloom owed me a life debt. I have taken now a hundred years from her and her wife and the child that has not been born. Now the debt is repaid, and she may live out the rest of her life in freedom.”

“I have no idea what you just said.”

“In time,” Hannibal murmurs, “in time, my Will.”

Will thinks of his nightmares, his constant companions over his entire life. He thinks of the battlefield and the cliff and the creature who never stopped chasing him. Once, the last bit caused him fear, too afraid to sleep at night. Now, he wonders if he might have misinterpreted it.

Maybe the creature who never stopped chasing him was more of a reason for hope than fear.

“If I don’t remember you – ”

“You always have.”

“But if I don’t. Will you find me again?”

Hannibal looks at him, and before his very eyes, fur recedes into skin and feathers smooth out into hair, until a man who looks vaguely familiar stands before him again. He’s wearing a 21st century suit, which has long gone out of fashion, yet Will instinctively knows every inch

and layer of it, every color and stitch and scrap of fabric, as though he had crafted it with his own hands.

“My Will,” Hannibal says, “I will always find you.”

FINIS

## Chapter End Notes

Join me tomorrow for Day 29: "Possession"! It will involve me ripping off a movie instead of a tv show, only this time it'll be a movie I've not actually seen. So. It'll be a scene from a movie. Please don't kill me when it's nothing like the movie, thank you in advance. See you then!

Also, I'm sorry that Beverly sort of disappeared from the end there. She wasn't in my original idea, but then again neither were Mason or Margot or Alana. So. Just pretend that she eventually got rescued and then went home to be a bada\*\* head of security for Margot and Alana and got her own happy ending with lots of spare time to tease the hell out of Will for Mr. Sniffy aka Hannibal.

# Possession

## Chapter Summary

Will Graham agrees to be possessed by the most infamous serial killer in human history. It's not his best decision.

## Chapter Notes

Warnings: implied cannibalism

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

When bodies start dropping in recreations of the famous kills of the Chesapeake Ripper, the most prolific serial killer of the 21st century, the pressure to catch the copycat only increases after each new kill. At first there are three bodies – a reasonable scandal to deal with. Then six, and it's a little harder. Then nine, and then twelve, and then fifteen, and suddenly everyone and their grandmother is starting to wonder if maybe, just maybe, the Ripper isn't quite as confined as everyone thought he was.

"It's not the Ripper," Jack Crawford tells the anxious room of world leaders. "I promise you, the Chesapeake Ripper is safely trapped in his totem, just the way he was originally bound when caught."

"And what makes you so sure of that?" snaps a general. "The Ripper's totem was lost ages ago! No one even knows what it looks like anymore."

"Because," Jack says, "we found the totem."

The projector lights up with a photo of a beautiful wood carving, hand carved the way things were back then, of a rearing stag, meticulously painted in strokes of black with rubies for eyes and ivory for antlers. Symbols are carved into its hooves and it's a rather striking image for something that doesn't move.

"Or, at least," Jack continues, "that's pretty sure how Doctor Graham thinks it would have looked, back in the day. Now, it looks more like this."

The next picture is a badly lit one, as if taken underground, and the rearing stag is still majestic, but the paint has peeled and the rubies are chipped and the ivory is faded, leaving a slightly more worn figure.

“And since the totem is intact, we’re fairly sure that the Ripper was still contained inside of when we found it.”

“Doctor Graham? Will Graham?” Another person scoffs, leaning back in their chair. “Isn’t he that weirdo who wrote that thesis on, what did he call it, the so-called Tooth Fairy? No one even has any proof that killer even existed, never mind nearly killed the Ripper and caused his defeat and imprisonment.”

“He was one who found the totem,” Jack points out. “So I think his weirdness is more of an asset than a hindrance.”

“Get to the point, Crawford,” General Kade Purnell says, impatience biting into her words. “We called you in here to tell us who the killer behind the copycat Ripper is, not to start going on random tangents about totems and past histories that are best left in the past. Failing that, I’d like to know your plan for tracking down whoever is the culprit. It’s the very least you can offer, given how many murders we’re dealing with.”

Jack smiles, and it’s a terrible smile. “For that, we have a special weapon. Dr. Graham?”

A twitching man in a patched jacket with a flannel shirt and glasses steps forward into the light. He looks more akin to a teenager than a respected expert in supernatural killers like the Chesapeake Ripper, but the visitor’s badge pinned to his chest clearly says in bold red letters “William Graham.”

Graham takes off his glasses, folding them neatly into his pocket. He places his right hand with all the fingers spread on the table and says one word, very quietly, under his breath.

“Hannibal.”

For a moment, nothing happens.

Then, slowly, to great gasps around the room, skeletal fingers the color of ash seem to creep up from the table, flexing and bending to grip the fingers Will Graham has down. They grip hands like lovers, and with a gasp and a flicker of lights, the hand flips over – and suddenly, they’re not looking at the mild-mannered Dr. Graham anymore.

They’re looking at a much, much taller creature, with antlers that scrape the ceiling and eyes that burn red like a dying sun and skin as black as the fingers. Its legs are long and jointed like the legs of a stag, and its fingers are more like claws, tapping against the table with a clicking noise that sounds straight out of every horror movie and terrifying dream. Even as the creature smiles, showing sharp teeth, many people are already recoiling from the table or reaching for their weapons.

“Meet Hannibal Lecter,” Jack says proudly. “Also known as the Chesapeake Ripper. He’s had many names and he’s walked this earth for far longer than all of our lives combined. And who better to help us find the copycat Ripper than the Ripper himself?”

For a long moment, there is only silence.

Then Kade Purnell leans back in, eyes hard as flint, and says, “This is the FBI, Crawford, not the magic circus.”

“Maybe it is magic,” Jack counters, “but the Ripper can do things we can’t even dream of. His abilities are beyond anything we can possibly match. And he’s pretty insulted that someone is stealing his thunder.”

“You’ve got three days, Jack,” Purnell sighs. “And then you better put this . . . monster back where it belongs.”

“You won’t regret it,” Jack promises, and looks at the creature who is now currently examining the projector with signs of interest. “Thank you, but we’d like Doctor Graham back now.”

The Ripper hisses. “It is uncomfortable, to continually switch back and forth for your amusement, Jack,” it says, its words clear and rippling despite the fact that it speaks from a mouth that’s a twisted parody of a human one. “I would prefer to remain as I am for some time until my Will recovers.”

“Not an option.”

“You are being very rude, Jack,” the Ripper murmurs, tapping a claw on the edge of the table with its head cocked to a side, a slight smile on its face. “And we all know what I do to those who are rude.”

“Perhaps. But I have your heart and your body and your totem. So. Give. Doctor. Graham. Back.”

The Ripper laughs, and then, in a blink of an eye, he is gone, leaving behind a slightly dazed human who immediately reaches for his glasses. The air seems to loosen and clear, and suddenly everyone can breathe again, and Jack seems to take it for tacit approval to charge ahead with his plan, leaving only shaking heads and prayers in his wake.

---

“You really shouldn’t taunt him like that, Jack.”

“The Ripper’s been trapped for like a thousand years in a tiny little totem. We knew he’d say anything to get free, and he agreed to our terms. It’ll be fine, Graham.”

“Every time he gets out, he feels . . . stronger. I don’t know if I can hold him.”

“You’re the expert on possessions, Graham. I think you’ll do just fine. Besides, the Ripper isn’t going to want to hurt the only person crazy enough to say yes to possession by murderer.”

“ . . . It’s not me I’m worried about Hannibal hurting.”

---

A week later, Will Graham goes missing.

So does Hannibal Lecter's body, trapped in stasis; his heart, locked in a sealed vault with no door; and his totem, tucked in a safety deposit box at the heart of the FBI.

When they review the security footage, to their horror, it's not the Ripper who walks up to claim the body. It's Will Graham, dressed in nothing but boxers and a white t-shirt, eyes glazed from sleep and barefoot, stepping carefully past every single security measure as if floating on a dream. When he reaches the internal chambers of Lecter's body, he leans down and kisses the man like awakening a sleeping princess, and the feed gives out just as an inky black figure flows from Graham's lips to Lecter's body – just in time for Hannibal Lecter to open his own eyes and take his own breath for the first time in a thousand years.

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Will wakes up, dazed and confused, on a boat that rocks gently in the waves of the open ocean.

“What the hell?” he says.

The door opens to reveal a tall man dressed in a tailored suit with an apron tied neatly and a towel over one shoulder. “Hello, Will Graham,” says the Chesapeake Ripper. “You have my gratitude for setting me free. I must admit that your plan worked flawlessly.”

“What plan? What are you talking about? Why – Why am I on a boat?”

“Some memory loss is an unfortunate side effect of disassociation between possessor and host,” the Ripper says. “Come down for breakfast. I will explain everything then, I promise. You need some good food in you, by the looks of it, and I have chosen only the best and freshest meat for you.”

“I'm a vegetarian,” Will says blankly. “I hate meat.”

“Not anymore,” the Ripper says simply. “Come.”

Will follows him, meek as a lamb, and Hannibal rejoices again in the fact that he found such a willing and powerful host to embrace him. He really does owe Will Graham a lot, and the time he spent resting in the back of Will's mind and soul have given him ample opportunity to become utterly and completely fascinated by the contrary creature that his host was, even constrained and beaten down by everything that's tried to cage Will in life. He is going to make sure that Will never wants for anything again.

And to be honest, it won't even be that difficult.

“Here,” Hannibal says with a smile. “Something simple to start. Just some scrambled eggs and sausage, for protein.”

FINIS

Tomorrow's prompt for Day 30 is "Ritual"! It will involve a reversal of one of my previous stories and Hannibal making cannibal puns & criticizing Will's clothing choices. See you then!

And the movie I ripped off today was Suicide Squad. I haven't seen it, so no spoilers please, but I was inspired by [this particular scene](#) in the promo material due to an ad that played that I couldn't skip.

# Ritual

## Chapter Summary

In all fairness, Will is incredibly drunk when he does the ritual that summons the devil for a rent-free good apartment in New York.

## Chapter Notes

Warnings: implied murder of random people, attempted murder of Hannibal, somewhat graphic description of Hannibal being tortured

Also . . . lots of references to Supernatural and my own weird headcanon for how angels work and what order the archangels are in. Does not reflect any truth at all, so don't mind me if it's totally wrong.

Also, I'm really sorry this is late, I had some RL projects that I of course did not put off to the very last minute possible and then had to scramble to complete them, thereby pulling an all-nighter that ruined my ability to write this ficlet. Of course I didn't do that.

Finally, when I hinted this was going to be a reversal of a previous fic, I meant that seriously. Because I wrote a fic where Will was the devil and Hannibal was the human, so now Hannibal is the devil and Will is the human. :D If you're curious, you can read "Don't Lose Your Head (Because the Devil's in the Details)" [here](#).

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

In all fairness, Will is incredibly drunk when he does the ritual that summons the devil for a rent-free good apartment in New York City in exchange for . . . well. To be honest, Will doesn't really have any idea what he promised, because Will woke up face down on the side of the road, blood crusting an open wound on his palm and a strange black symbol burned into the earth, as if with a great fiery stamp. The only reason Will even knows what he asked for is because when he gets home to his rat-infested little room, there's a plain white envelope with keys, instructions, and a single black feather, shiny and iridescent despite the fact that it's clearly burned beyond repair.

“What the hell,” Will says.

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It turns out even the devil has better taste than Will.

Will asked for an apartment that wouldn't make him choose between food and electricity, and instead when he follows the instruction to a terrifying tall building with gleaming floors and glass doors and a little army of security guards, he finds out that he has a penthouse. An actual penthouse, with a rooftop garden and indoor heated swimming pool and a private elevator and a luxurious king-sized bed and fully stocked kitchen and enormous television and basically everything Will would ever need times infinity.

Will is so amazed that he ends up walking towards the rooftop heated pool in a daze, fails to notice the sliding glass door, and knocks himself out.

When Will wakes up, he finds the devil leaning over him a frown on his face.

"What the hell!" Will says again, except this time it comes out more like the squeak of a mouse and barely intelligible.

The devil tsks. "Invoking my domain is not a proper greeting, Will," he chides, looking more weary than insulted. "Especially after I came here to ensure that you had found your end of the bargain a respectable choice."

"Respectable – ?" Will gapes. "I just wanted an apartment!"

"I believe a penthouse apartment is still an apartment. No, do not move just yet; I'm afraid that healing is not one of my better talents at this time, so the dizziness will pass in its own time."

" . . . You know, I'm not sure which of those statements I object more to."

The devil cocks his head. "I imagine the healing part. I am still an angel, Will, even as a fallen one. I still have the ability to heal humans if I so choose. But I am . . . constrained by this human form, as it is. My abilities are limited on earth, and to employ the fullest extent of my powers I would end up burning out your eyes and destroying your ears, which would be counterproductive."

"Yeah, let's . . . I like my eyes and ears, thanks."

---

Will learns a lot of interesting things about the devil over the course of the first day in his new apartment. First is that the devil prefers the name "Hannibal" to Lucifer – "Many of my kindred have taken on new names and new faces; it is the way of time, and I am no exception – and second is that he abhors rudeness, including lying. To that end, Hannibal just refuses point-blank to tell Will what he promised in exchange for his new, stress-free life, saying that the price has been paid and discussing it will only unduly stress Will out.

Hannibal also informs Will that he's Will's new roommate.

"You're living with me?!"

"Clearly someone has to. Your health is atrocious, I do not understand how you have not dropped dead of a heart attack already, given how much of this . . . 'fast food' you have

ingested.”

“It’s cheap, and I was poor.”

“And now that rent will no longer be a concern, that money is free to go towards better alternatives for nourishment.”

“I still have lots of other things,” Will argues. “I have tuition and books and fees and loan payments. Going to school in the modern day isn’t cheap, Hannibal.”

Hannibal just looks at him. “Very well,” the devil sighs. “I see that you are not going to budge on this issue. I suppose that you will be an acceptable candidate for me to test some of my other habits.”

Given that Hannibal immediately moves towards the impeccable display of very sharp kitchen knives with this statement, Will thinks he’s more than justified when he immediately makes a run for the private elevator because even if he knows that there’s no way a puny human like him could outrun the second-most powerful angel in the cosmos, William Graham is not going down without a fight.

However, when he slaps the call button, nothing happens.

“I do have hobbies beyond rending apart humans, Will,” Hannibal calls over to him, sounding miffed. “What kind of uncivilized being do you take me for?”

“I think you’re the devil,” Will replies, pushing the call button again. “And I think God cast you down because you said you wanted to eradicate humanity from the earth to make a kingdom for your fellow brethren.”

Hannibal’s face does the funniest little twitch at his words, and Will can’t decipher it. He would say that it’s strange, but what does Will know about what’s normal for angels?

“That,” Hannibal says finally, “was a long, long, long time ago.”

“How long?” Will asks, because he doesn’t know when to quit.

Hannibal closes his eyes. Takes a deep breath. Opens his eyes. They’re different, his eyes, and in no way could pass for a human. They glow like a strange fire in a color Will has no name for. It’s kind of similar to how star-fire can be bright white as well as orange – you’d never imagine “fire” could be white, but it is, and it’s strangely beautiful for it, yet no human definitions of color could possibly do it justice.

“Long enough,” Hannibal answers, and it’s the end of that discussion for a very long time.

---

Hannibal is an immortal angelic being who’s been around since the beginning of time, but Will refuses to let Hannibal use that as an excuse, so for the most part, Will gets away with calling Hannibal weirder and weirder names whenever he pops up with one of the weird habits he’s acquired over the ages he’s been alive.

“Who knew,” Will mumbles into his coffee one morning, half awake as the fricking devil serves him scrambled eggs, homemade waffles, and sausages, “that the devil would like cooking?”

Hannibal slips him an elaborately arranged packed lunch in revenge, causing Will no end of teasing taunts from his classmates.

Hannibal also enjoys playing a variety of instruments, and sometimes he forgets that Will is a human who needs sleep and Will wakes up to him playing the violin or the piano or the theremin at a frankly ungodly hour, to which Hannibal merely says, “My father made all hours, and therefore, no hour can be considered ‘ungodly’, Will.”

Will chucks a pillow at him and goes back to sleep.

Hannibal’s weirdest habit, though, is definitely his fixation on art. Every single time Will crosses the living room, there’s a new painting hanging in the dining room, some abstract and obtuse and others so detailed that Will feels the urge to cover them up.

“Humans have copulated in far more explicit terms and public settings. I have seen it.”

“You’ve spied on people – no, not going there, just get the painting of the swan mating with the lady out of the room where I eat food, Hannibal!”

“Considering that I make the food you eat, I feel like you have little ground to stand on.”

“ . . . I thought you conjured the ingredients?”

“Oh, no, I fetched you the very best myself.”

“From where?”

“Will that detract from your enjoyment of the food I produce for you?”

“Hannibal.”

“I promise that it is an ethical and organized source.”

“Hannibal!”

“Some things are better enjoyed unknown, Will.”

And that’s not even half of their arguments. Will also uncovers piles and piles of beautifully rendered sketches, most of them random people and settings Will doesn’t recognize but imagines Hannibal got from his travels around the world “gathering ingredients” or by people-watching from the penthouse windows, but some of them are quite detailed sketches of Will himself. Will has no objections for the ones where he’s studying or eating food, but he does question why Hannibal felt the need to sketch that time he fell asleep with his face in cake.

“Humanity is beautiful in its own way, and humanity includes you,” is all Hannibal will say when Will points it out.

“I thought you thought humanity was a blight upon the world.”

“There can be beauty in destruction.”

“And the beauty in that picture of me scratching my butt?”

“Therein would lie the blight.”

“You’re impossible.”

“I am angel. Of course I am beyond the comprehension of your human mind.”

“Did you just call me stupid?”

“I find you a particularly intelligent example of your kind. You are a credit to humanity.”

“That did not help.”

“And here I thought my ability to be comforting was improving.”

“It’s really not.”

Despite his quirks, Hannibal is still by far the best roommate Will’s ever had. He turns out an amazing and never-ending stream of meals, each as unique and different as the last, all tailored to things Will shows favor to. He willingly engages in intense discussions with Will at all sorts of hours, producing lots of new thoughts for Will when he writes his essays and assignment for university, although sometimes Will has to edit out the Hannibal part of the commentary when he devolves into rants about humanity’s wastefulness and forgetfulness. A few times, Hannibal even kidnaps Will and whisks him off to strange new places, and Will learns to appreciate seeing the sun rise from the top of the highest mountains while they enjoy freshly made bread and hot beverages or the way the aurora borealis gleams and dances as they stand among the clouds and chow on tartlets and cake.

“You know,” Will says drowsily from where he’s rolled a little comfy spot in the clouds, “you’re really not that bad to live with.”

“Your appreciation is duly noted, Will,” Hannibal remarks dryly.

“No, seriously.” Will rolls over again to face the devil, who’s sitting with his legs crossed like a prim little professor, sending up a little puff of cloud and sprinkle of rainwater. “You’re not bad at all. I’d say you’re better than anyone else.”

“I think you are lacking in candidates to compare to me.”

“Wow, the devil has a sense of modesty.”

“I am angel, Will. How could any human compare to what I am?”

“There’s the Hannibal I know and love,” Will drawls, and the yawn that he has immediately afterwards is why he fails to notice the way Hannibal twitches at his words.

---

“William, I believe part of our understanding was that your job remained at your job.”

“Shut up and hand me the bandages, Hannibal,” Will orders.

Hannibal frowns even deeper at the dirty, whimpering dog that’s currently on the table, but he at least departs heading towards the first aid kit without further argument. A kind random person had brought the brought the brindled golden dog in earlier that day, and although Will had tried his best for the dog, eventually the director had placed him on the rejected list, saying that he was too old and too injured to be adopted.

“And you took that as permission to dognap this animal, as it were?”

“He’s hurt,” Will repeats stubbornly. “What kind of vet would I be if I just let them put him down just because he’s a bit old and injured?”

Hannibal sighs. “Humans.”

“Just ignore Hannibal,” Will tells the dog, who licks at him gratefully. “There, that’s better, isn’t it? I think I’ll call you Winston. You’re going to like it here, I bet. There’s lots of places to rest and heal and you can be mine. Plus you can enjoy some amazing food.”

“Are my culinary talents to be co-opted for a dog now?”

“Winston’ll love it.”

Hannibal touches Winston then, a quick pat of fur, but it’s not like a pet. More like an examination, quick and intensive in a way only an angel could pull off.

“With that injury he’ll never walk again,” Hannibal says quietly.

“So what?”

Hannibal’s eyes light up, burning like star-fire again, and this time Will finds himself frozen of his own volition when Hannibal lays both hands on Winston again, a bright piercing light glittering from his palms as Winston whines and kicks and yelps as if he’s being burnt, yet a moment later Hannibal backs away and all the blood has vanished as though it was a bad dream, leaving Winston’s leg straight and fluffy with fur again.

“Did you . . . just heal Winston?”

Hannibal’s face twitches. “It seemed . . . rude not to.”

Will’s not sure what possesses him to do it, but he finds himself hugging Hannibal at that moment, squeezing tightly as Hannibal stiffens against him.

“Thanks, Hannibal,” Will says sincerely.

“Humans,” Hannibal says, but it lacks the standard bite of derision, and Will sees him staring into the distance at random moments for the rest of the night. Secretly, Will wonders if it’s the first time he’s been touched in a long time, and he makes a silent vow to do it more often, just to throw the devil off guard.

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Of course, their perfect little world doesn’t last forever, although given the constant badgering and questions, Will seriously thought that the first intruders would be his friends.

Unfortunately, it’s not.

Will walks in one night to find a statuesque blond lady sitting primly at the table, sipping placidly on a glass of wine. Her eyes gleam with the same star-fire that Hannibal’s do, which is why Will immediately comes to a dead stop.

“William Graham, I presume,” the lady says.

“Uh . . . not to be rude, but who are you and what are you doing here?”

The lady sets the glass of wine down. “I wanted to see for myself if it was true,” she says calmly, monotone in a way that makes Will shiver. It’s like someone who’s never talked before is talking through a human mouthpiece, with no emotion or change in their voice, and it’s nothing like how Hannibal speaks, fluid and accented like a real human. “Lucifer always showed such disdain for our humanity in the past that I found it . . . curious for him to take up residence with one.”

“He likes being called Hannibal now.”

“He may like whatever he declares he likes. My brother is a fickle being, even for an angel. But there is truth to be found even in a fickle being, and one truth remains all the same: he is Lucifer, and Lucifer is he. I knew him in the past, and he has not changed.”

“Hannibal’s been living with me for six months,” Will says. “Why now? If you’re so against him, why didn’t you act ages ago?”

The lady tilts her head. “I assumed he was trying to find a new vessel. But you are not of his line. He would have burned you out and moved on, as he always has, and there would be no need for intervention.”

“Intervention,” Will scoffs. An angel this lady may be, but Will can still read. Her face shows derision and weariness and resignation, and it all comes together in a rather damning picture, if Will can say that. “You don’t care about intervention or protecting humanity, whoever you are. You just couldn’t be bothered to go through the whole process of coming down here to deal with him, could you? In truth, you couldn’t give any less of a damn what happened to me or anyone else. Hannibal could wipe us all out and you still wouldn’t lift a finger.”

“Careful, Mr. Graham,” the angel says softly. “You know nothing of angels but fallen ones. I am a true angel.”

“Angels were told to love and cherish humanity, and to guide and protect them,” Will fires back. “I think Hannibal understands humanity more than you, which makes him more a true angel than you’ll ever be.”

It’s over in less than a blink of an eye. Will’s barely closed his eyelids when the angel is suddenly right in front of him, a powerful grip locked onto his throat as she lifts him effortlessly into the air, causing him to gasp and kick and punch, but each contact between his fists and feet and her body is like punching adamantium, and Will finds himself bloody and beaten without any effort on her part.

“I said to tread carefully. Let’s see what Lucifer cares about humanity when he finds what’s left of you – ”

“Raphael.”

Hannibal’s voice is as soft as the angel’s, but the angel still blanches. A second later, she vanishes and reappears at the end of the table again, whilst Will crashes to the ground and fills the silence with his coughing.

“Lucifer,” says Raphael.

“I hear you go by Bedelia now,” Hannibal says, but there is a bite to his words, a true bite, fierce and otherworldly, in response to the name he now no longer uses.

“A human mask,” Raphael says. “Just like yours.”

“But I did not peek beyond the stitches of your person suit as you have done to me. How rude, sister. Shockingly rude, in fact.”

“You would punish me for a human?”

“Will Graham is mine,” Hannibal says, and his voice leaves no room for argument. Will blushes from the mere force of it, as though Hannibal’s words had stripped him bare for all the world to see, kneeling and bound at Hannibal’s feet, because it feels more like a claim than the casual statement Bedelia’s reaction says it is.

“A lot of humans have been yours. All perished at your hand.”

“Will Graham is mine,” Hannibal repeats. “And perhaps you are stronger in Heaven, sister, but the garden and hell are mine, and on earth our birth still matters. I am older than you. I can still crush you.”

For an eternity, there is silence.

Then Bedelia’s shoulders bow, just a fraction of an inch, like a concession.

“The Host grows restless, Lucifer,” Bedelia murmurs. “Leave Earth soon, brother, or it will become messy.”

“It always is,” Hannibal replies.

And then Bedelia is gone, wine glass and all, as if she had never been, and the only evidence of her passing is a slight breeze and knocks a few napkins askew.

Hannibal is silent as he helps Will into a chair, and his silence is so stony that even Winston, who normally is effusive in his affection to Hannibal and Will alike, shies away with a whine, preferring to lick and curl up with Will instead. Eventually, though, Will breaks the silence.

“Who was that?”

“Raphael,” Hannibal says after a moment. “The fourth of the seven archangels to emerge from creation. At one point, my sister carried the title of Healer among us.”

“At one point? I thought you were immortal.”

“She is no longer deserving of the title. Once she taught and helped humanity as faithfully as any of us did, healing the sick and tending to the wounded. Now she neither hates you nor loves you; she is indifferent.” Hannibal pauses. “May I heal you?”

“ . . . Why do you need permission?”

“I am still bound by the rules of angels. I cannot help you without your consent. But I would also like it for another reason.”

“Which is?”

“I am fallen,” Hannibal explains. “It will hurt.”

“And?”

“You do not understand, Will. Even as the Morningstar, healing was not my forte. It will burn like nothing you have ever experienced before, but it is the only way I know how to bring healing.”

“Then why do you want to?”

Hannibal touches him then, initiating contact for the first time. Before, Will’s initiated every single touch, but now Hannibal brushes his fingers across Will’s hair and face with a sense of reverence that threatens to make Will blush again. His eyes are unblinking and fierce, but his touch is gentle, almost like worship.

“Because you are mine,” Hannibal says simply. “I do not like my sister’s mark on you.”

Will bares his chin. “Then do it.”

It does burn, the way angels heal, but Will finds it not as bad as Hannibal warned him. If anything, Will would say it brings more pleasure than pain. It’s like liquid sun, dripping into his veins and spreading through his body, changing him from the inside out until he’s glowing to match the brilliance of Hannibal’s alien eyes, and once the glow stops, Will is left panting and unblemished as though born anew.

“You,” Hannibal whispers, “are truly remarkable, my dear.”

---

Will wakes up that night to a terrible scream, one that makes his ears bleed and his head ring with pain, and when he flails he ends up knocking off the lamp from his nightstand, so he emerges to find the source of confusion dazed, bleeding from where he’s walked on broken, and clutching at his ears as Winston whimpers and whines at his side.

What he does see takes his breath away.

Hannibal is hanging from the ceiling, a twisted rope of flickering flame encircling his neck and arms to leave him dangling as if from an invisible cross. Symbols have been carved all over his body and two long lines pierce his arms, leaving blood to form a small ocean at his feet. Hannibal’s mouth is open in a silent scream, eyes glowing from the full force of his power, but still he bleeds and weakens as fire licks at his open wounds.

Arrayed around him are four other beings, grave and silent, who cast strange shadows on the floor.

“Stop, you’re hurting him!” Will says, and darts forward.

He runs into a solid wall of invisible air.

“Do not interfere, human,” one of them intones blandly. “We are cleansing the earth of Lucifer’s filth. Rejoice and do not be afraid.”

“His name is Hannibal!” Will spits. “Get him down!”

Another angel makes a gesture, and Hannibal’s body twists and arches as new flames spring to light in the pool of his blood, reaching and licking at his feet. The rope twists and tightens, and despite Hannibal’s struggles, he remains hanging over the fire, his wounds growing ever larger as a third angel draws sigils in the floor.

“He is the devil,” they say. “He must perish.”

Another gesture, and Hannibal screams again, breaking through whatever protections they’ve cast, as enormous wings break from his back and wildly swing through the room. They’re so big that the other angels duck as they pass overhead, big enough to swallow the entire room, and while they’re not the white of angelic paintings, they aren’t black either. They’re a gradient of gorgeous colors, flickering and fading, singed and broken in parts where Will assumes Hannibal was first cast down and injured.

“We will cast him into oblivion, where he can do no more harm.”

“No,” Will says.

The first angel who spoke tsks at him. “We are doing this for your benefit, human. Lucifer must be destroyed.”

Something bubbles up within Will at those words, half-remembered but oft-repeated. Some part of Will knows those words, intimately as a lover, yet rejects them with equal fervor. It gives Will the strength to break through the barrier, and Will doesn't even recognize his own voice when he says, "*Let my brother go, Uriel. I will not let you destroy him.*"

Uriel does not answer.

He does not get a chance to.

Will makes a gesture of his own, and a sword slides into his hand, gleaming and glowing. Its power burns Will's flesh as he grasps it, but no pain registers. And why would it? Pain means nothing to an angel, and that part of him sings in joy as two parts join together once again. They are sword and Grace, and they are beyond human comprehension, but all the other angels pale and flinch at the sight of his glory.

"*BE GONE,*" Will says, and the angels are wiped from his sight like they never existed.

Hannibal looks at him, and Will sees him in a new light, beautiful and broken but beautiful all the same. He burns with the same star-fire Will always saw in his eyes, but his wings – his wings are the most beautiful of all, a rainbow of colors that are beyond name or comprehension or description. Yet still, there is but one word for the emotion in Hannibal's eyes when he beholds the sight of Will, sword in hand.

"Michael," Lucifer says, and it's unquestionably an angel speaking.

Will blinks.

The spell breaks and the sword clatters to the floor.

"I – I'm not Michael," Will says, and flees.

---

Gabriel finds him curled up in the clouds, eyes blank and unseeing as the aurora borealis dances around him. She sits neatly at his side, wings tucked at her side.

"Hello, Will."

Some part of Will recognizes her as "sister", but most of Will just wants to vomit.

"And here I thought you might call me Michael," he says dully.

"Michael was my most beloved brother," Gabriel says. "You are not Michael. You are merely a human who was touched by his Grace, once upon a time."

Will nods, although he doesn't really need to. Gabriel had spoken without doubt or question. "I can't believe I forgot," Will murmurs, because now he remembers with crystal clarity that night, once when he was a child, seeing a shooting star fall into the field with a great crash of sound and light, and finding only an injured man, gasping and bleeding and stunned, the imprint of ash in the shape of great wings surrounding him with a gleaming sword at his side. Will had given the man water and food, but it had not been enough; the man had still

breathed his last as the moon shone down upon them. Will had attempted to bury him, but when he'd finished digging the grave, he'd found that the body had vanished, leaving only the imprints of feathers in its wake.

"Michael gave you the gift of forgetfulness. Humans are not meant to see us as we pass."

"What did he do? To me."

Gabriel says, "I do not know. But part of Michael lives on in you, that much I know. As for the rest . . . well. Michael was the first of us. He could do things even the Morningstar could not have dreamed of. I have no answers for what he did to you."

*Thank you, Will Graham.*

*For what?* Will had asked, tiny and small.

*For reminding me about the good,* the man had said, and never spoken again.

"But why do you hide from my brother, Will Graham?"

Will looks at her. "I killed his brothers and sisters," he says blankly. "Your brothers and sisters. Hannibal loved angels in a way he'll never love humans."

Gabriel hums. "Violence is what you understand, and thus it was the message you chose to express to my brothers and sisters," she says slowly. "And of all things my brother has failed to understand about humanity, do you really believe that violence is one of those things? Angels are warriors of God, Will Graham. We were created to obey, to destroy, to fight. Violence is what we understand."

"I don't –"

"Go to my brother," she interrupts. "Sulking is not becoming of Michael."

That strange part of him rises in Will again, and his voice, when he speaks, is not his voice at all. "And curtness was not becoming of Gabriel, the great messenger."

Gabriel shrugs. "I go by a different name now. I am Chiyoh. Curtness suits me better."

---

Will finds Hannibal sulking dramatically on a cliff overlooking the sea. Will can see how wind and rain and the ocean have eroded it as the years have gone by, but the true cause of the erosion are the great fractures that lie beneath it which make it more susceptible to crumbling.

This, Will knows, is where Michael opened the earth and cast down Lucifer, and even now, with the crater gone, the earth remembers the shock of the fall of the Morningstar.

"Michael," Hannibal greets him.

"I am not Michael," Will tells him. "Just . . . just a part of him, I guess."

“You stink of Gabriel,” Hannibal sighs, but his tone is . . . fond, in an absent sort of way, so Will lets it slide.

“Are you better?”

“Gabriel brought me to Bedelia. I am restored.”

Will isn’t sure how long they stand there, on the precipice of destruction, as the cliff crumbles beneath their feet into the sea. It could be minutes or days or years. He doesn’t really care. He has Hannibal, and Hannibal is alive. That is all he cares about.

“If I’m yours,” Will says abruptly, “does that mean you’re mine?”

“No.”

“Look, I’m sorry about killing – ”

Hannibal whirls around. “You think I care of the fate of my brethren?” he snarls, spreading his wings wide and casting great shadows behind him. “You think I care for Bedelia or Chiyoh or Michael or the rest? You are *mine*, and I saw you first. You belong to me. I do not care what Grace Michael blessed you with – you are mine and you always have been.”

“Only if you’re mine,” Will tells him stubbornly, because he has standards even he has no self-esteem.

“No human could lay claim to what I am.”

“Are you jealous of your brother?” Will asks, as comprehension begins to dawn.

“No!”

“You are, aren’t you?”

“No!”

“Jesus, Hannibal, you’re seriously jealous of a guy who up and died on me that one time?”

“Do not invoke the name of my half-brother, please.”

“I’ll do whatever I damn please.”

“Not when you are mine.”

“So make me mine,” Will dares him. “Erase Gabriel and Raphael and Michael and everyone else. Make me yours, Morningstar, and make yourself mine in return. Unless you haven’t got the nerve to, oh great angel?”

“I am going to eat you alive,” Hannibal says.

“ . . . You’re joking, right? Han – Hannibal! Hannibal, put me down!”

“No.”

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## EPILOGUE

Chiyoh comes to him, later than night, whilst Will slumbers the sleep of the exhausted and the content, drooling as only humans do. Hannibal finds it unreasonably charming, but perhaps it's merely the glow of satisfaction that mars his perception.

“Or perhaps that great big claiming mark you laid upon his soul,” Chiyoh remarks dryly.

“And your reason for coming was?”

“I found them.”

Chiyoh leads him to a small grove, deep the forest of an abandoned castle, covered in snow and fireflies. At its heart, there is a small chamber housing a pair of beautiful wings, as perfect as the day Michael carved them from his back.

“What will you do with them?” Chiyoh asks.

“I will not lose Will.”

“Humans are not meant to bear our wings, Morningstar,” Chiyoh cautions. “Our wings and our Grace and our swords – these were meant to be our gifts, as souls and emotion and free will were meant to be the gifts of humans.”

“Will has a sword and Grace. He will survive it.”

“But he will be alone. There is no other in existence like him. Not even the nephilim had our wings.”

“He will have me,” Hannibal says simply. “For now and all of eternity.”

Chiyoh sighs, and her wings flick dismissively as though shedding all responsibility. It's not unlike her, although Hannibal remembers a slightly . . . chattier Messenger, when they were young and everything was new.

“So he is yours, then.”

“I am his.”

The ritual is short, at least, and Will sleeps through all of it. In the morning, Hannibal tells himself as beholds his beloved with the wings of an angel and the soul of a human, he will explain. He will explain their powers, their consequences, their secrets. He will explain everything to Will but one thing, because gifting these wings to Will carry a message he knows Will won't need any explanation to understand.

“I am yours,” Hannibal tells him, in his true voice. “Now and forever, Will, I am yours.”

Will does not wake, but some part of him understands, because in his sleep he smiles with delight and pulls Hannibal close, humming the songs of ancient creation the same way the archangels once did all together, at the dawn of world, and Hannibal finds it fitting to hear them anew, lullabies in the dark, as he prepares to begin a new life with Will.

FINIS

## Chapter End Notes

Join me tomorrow for Day 31: "Happy Halloween"! I originally was going to ask for inspiration because I had no ideas but then my all-nighter brain was like "Nah, I got you" and I came up with something. So. Stay tuned for that.

Also, I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THE FSCK THIS FICLET WAS, OKAY. It was literally just supposed to be Will and Hannibal in a sweet apartment with Hannibal cooking food and making fashion jokes about Will, and maybe involve Alana or Margot swinging by and making sugar daddy jokes. I don't know where the angels came in. Or anything else. I blame Supernatural. Even though I'm totally not up to date with the recent season, my bad.

Also, you all are amazing with the comments and stuff, I love you all. And don't fret, I won't vanish after this is done (although I may take like day or two off). I do have some plans for November, which I will further explain in the next update, but I think you will enjoy what I have in store. :D

# Happy Halloween

## Chapter Summary

Will knows without being told how bad it is that his only alibi for the Jack'o'lantern Killer is that he was at a pumpkin carving class.

## Chapter Notes

Warnings: some hurt! Will due to everyone being a jerk to him except Hannibal

Also, this is my (late) entry to Hannibal Cre-Ate-Ive's [#ThePumpkinIsPeople Fest](#).

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

## PROLOGUE

When Will is woken up in the middle of the night and escorted to the infirmary by a smirking guard, at first he thinks nothing of it. It's just another in a long line of unnecessary humiliations by doctors and nurses and guards who mock him for being caught and convicted for crimes he didn't commit. He doesn't even meet their eyes or try and talk to them anymore, since no one believes a word he says.

He's not the Copycat Shrike, but no one here cares and the FBI is too busy patting themselves on the back to notice the discrepancies or check out Will's alibi.

Still, he is aware enough to realize that whatever the doctor gives him is definitely not anesthesia, but by then the paralyzing agent is too strong for him to do anything but blink, and Will can't even scream when the doctor slices into his throat.

He passes out from the pain, and he wakes up to the grim sight of Jack Crawford at his bedside.

"The judge overturned the verdict," Jack says the second he sees Will's eyes open. "You're free to go, as all charges have been dropped. And . . . And the doctor who did this will be charged, I promise."

Will wants to ask what the doctor did, but deep down, he already knows.

Will never does speak again, and although the doctors at the hospital press him for surgery and therapy, he just shakes his head and takes up using the tablet and voice app. It's like anyone listened to him when his vocal cords worked anyways, so there's really no reason to

try and fix them. And besides, Will has plans that involve never talking to anyone ever again in the future, so, again, no reason to try and fix them.

The FBI pays him an embarrassingly large settlement for the wrongful conviction, wrongful imprisonment, the way his name is smeared in the press, and the way the doctor who thought he was the Copycat illegally paid off the guards to destroy Will's vocal cords and scar his neck. Will takes the money with a smile, closes his house, and moves everyone and everything down to Florida.

His favorite moment is when he disconnects his cellphone and leaves it behind on the floor.

Will Graham is done with the FBI, he tells himself, and Jack Crawford can scream and bluster all he likes. He can find a new scapegoat now, because Will is done.

---

Will finds that he likes life in Florida. He buys a little house and a large plot of land where his nearest neighbors are two hours' drive away, and his dogs are ecstatic at the warm weather, the new places to explore and dig, and the way Will has so much more time to play with them. Will fishes in the rivers, constructs his own plot of vegetables for his garden, and passes his time happily oblivious to the goings of the outer world. His only concession is a monthly stop at the local farmer's market to purchase what he can't make for him or his dogs, and he strikes up a relatively good understanding with the people there. They don't say anything about how he communicates via tablet and voice app, and he pays them well for their products and their services.

The only one he regards with a small amount of affectation is a woman named Molly, who has a son named Walter who adores Will's dogs and doesn't care that Will himself doesn't speak.

The only downside is that she insists that he needs to get out more to practice his slow progress at learning sign language, and although he avoids most of her suggestions due to the impracticability of a four hour drive just to mingle and be social, eventually he does cave into to one particularly interesting suggestion.

"It'll be fun," Molly insists, waving the flyer at him. "Pumpkin carving, Will, you love pumpkins."

Will's tablet speaks for him. "I'd rather stay out in my house in the woods, thanks."

"You're already signed up."

Will's mouth moves, and he winces at the pain. Sometimes, he still forgets that he's like Ariel; no voice and invisible among the sea of normal humans, but the memory remains.

"What possessed you to do that?" Will asks finally.

"You," Molly declares, "you need to socialize, Will, I swear to god you're becoming like a hermit vampire out there. You're wearing a scarf in October, it's unnatural. You act like sunlight is going to burn you."

“Are you going to come with me?”

“No, Walter wants to go to a haunted house. He’s dressing up as a werewolf this time.”

Will nods, because he already knows. He helped construct the costume, even though some of the tears aren’t quite as they intended because Buster got into the cloth and took a few exploratory bites. It’s a ritual in Walter and Molly’s house, to dress up and seek out candy by going trick or treating on haunted trails and haunted houses, to spend time together as the family they are, and Will doesn’t begrudge them that.

He still doesn’t want to go to a pumpkin carving class though.

Still, after much pressure from Molly and begging from Walter, Will caves.

---

He later regrets this when he realizes that it is a couples’ pumpkin carving class, and in a haunted mansion to boot.

Will finds out when a tall man in a three piece suit steps and heads straight for Will, offering his hand and saying, “Molly told me you would be wearing a scarf. I assume you are Will?”

Will looks from his hand to his pristine leather shoes, his waistcoat, his elegantly knotted tie, and his stupidly attractive face and promptly curses Molly in the deep dark corners of his mind. In another life, Will might’ve found this man attractive and maybe might even have mustered up the courage to talk to him, but right now, with no voice and sweating under the protective layers of his scarves, Will feels more like the man is a zombie stealing his brain or perhaps a demon or witch to steal away his voice and ability to think straight.

“Vampire stole your tongue?”

It’s awkward, but Will manages to fish out his tablet and laboriously type out his message. The man’s face lights up with understanding, but strangely, Will feels no pressure or impatience. He simply waits for Will to finish and gives every appearance of understanding and eagerness to hear what Will has to say.

“I thought the saying was ‘cat stole your tongue’.”

The man smiles. “I thought the substitution was appropriate for a pumpkin carving class, given how many vampires decorate the hallways.”

“I hate to break it to you, but those are just jack’o’lanterns with badly carved sharp teeth.”

“Including the one with the scythe?”

“I think it’s meant to be an artistic interpretation of a witch’s hat.”

“Well, I am glad to have you as my guide,” the man says with a small smile. It’s small because it hardly changes the man’s face, but he also strikes Will as a rather controlled man who doesn’t express things willy-nilly, and Will finds himself grateful for that. Part of the

reason he lives like a hermit is to avoid other people and the way their emotions spill over into Will, after all.

“Hannibal Lecter.”

“Will Graham. Think you already knew that though.”

“I did, but it is still nice to meet you.”

The class gets off to a relatively warm start. The instructor is full of humor and great at giving good tips, and Hannibal is an easy person to work with. Will picks something simple and copies one of the tarot cards the instructor passes out that has easy outlines to follow, whilst Hannibal goes off on some masterpiece of something he calls a wendigo.

“You’re drawing a supernatural cannibalistic creature?”

“Is that not appropriate for a full moon?”

“You’re thinking of a werewolf.”

“Ah, my apologies.” Hannibal scans his half-completed wendigo, which has frightfully good antlers that twist and arch along the top of the pumpkin. He hasn’t gotten to the face yet, but Will has a feeling that it will turn out marvelous all the same.

Will is about to reply when someone bumps into their tablet, causing Will’s knife and his table to fall to the floor and erasing his message.

“Sorry, freak, didn’t mean to scare you,” the man says, smirking, as Will emerges from the floor with his cheeks flushed.

Hannibal doesn’t move or even twitch, but Will shies away from him all the same. Something about the cold look in his eyes is hair raising in a way that makes Will think dark thoughts, like water welling up from the deep and swallowing trespassers who tread on deceptively thin layers of ice. It’s a revelation and a tease all at once, and it makes Will want to back away to demonstrate that he is not prey and bare his throat to such a powerful predator, two conflicting desires that make him freeze in his tracks.

Hannibal leans close, touching Will along the shoulder. “Are you all right, my darling?”

Will, in his panic, forgets the table and merely taps out Morse code and half-remembered signs into Hannibal’s side, but Hannibal takes it in stride.

“This man was just about to apologize to you,” Hannibal says.

“Jesus, no need to get worked up.”

“This is the night of devils, not the son of God.”

The man turns his gaze on Will, and it’s like being scraped with sandpaper, rudeness and sadistic glee a painful slap along his senses. “Where’d you dig this one up, freak? I thought

the devils only came out at witching hour.”

It’s like a backwards masquerade, where Will can feel all of his masks sliding off, Hannibal tense and fierce at his side and this man completely uncaring, revealing all of Will’s insecurities and fears to the world so that it can clamor at his strangeness, and he’s caught like a bug under a microscope, pinned and helpless and dissected for all to see.

“That is enough,” Hannibal says quietly.

*Bye*, Will signs quickly, because he can see the instructor heading over with a frown and he knows this isn’t going to end well and he really wishes he could’ve ended things better but right now all he wants are his dogs, his bed, and silence, so he hopes Molly will forgive him for ruining what was a nice blind date when he abruptly stands and rushes out, heading straight for his car like Cinderella fleeing the ball.

He doesn’t let himself think past that analogy, because although Hannibal is as fancy and dressed up as any Prince Charming, he doubts he’ll ever see the man again.

---

Will is woken up the next morning by his door being practically kicked through and his dogs causing a ruckus. When he finally gets to the door, he has one minute to comprehend that Jack Crawford is at his door before the man shoves a newspaper in his face.

The headline says it all. *KILLER STRIKES AGAIN, DUBBED “JACK’O’LANTERN KILLER”*

“I need an alibi,” Jack tells him. “We found blood on your door.”

Will gives him a look and fetches his tablet. “It’s fake blood.”

“For what?”

“For a séance recreation of Ghostbusters,” Will types out, and he wishes dearly for a sarcastic setting for his voice app, because everything just comes out as one tone and he can tell from Jack’s face that the sarcasm would not have been appreciated. “It’s almost Halloween, Jack, I was decorating for the trick-or-treaters.”

“That’s not an alibi. You’re coming with me.”

---

They leave Will with a blanket, a glass of water, and a coffee cup, and he’s there sitting in silence for a good half an hour before suddenly the door opens and Hannibal is coming in, along with a lady with a briefcase and followed by a cop who’s scrambling to keep up.

“Will,” Hannibal says, and Will’s so desperate for answers that he doesn’t flinch away when Hannibal touches his cheek, reverent and gentle.

“What are you doing here?” Will signs.

Hannibal's eyes flicker, but apparently multilingual is another one of his many talents, because he smoothly replies, "I heard you needed an alibi."

To the cop, Hannibal says, "I was with Will Graham all night long. The class did not end until midnight, well after your timeframe for when the victim was taken and displayed. You have no reason to detain him here like this and deprive him of the ability to reach out."

"Suspects are not allowed to keep their tech on them, we need to examine it," the cop blusters.

Hannibal shrugs off his overcoat and drapes it over Will's shoulders, and Will blames the shiver that runs through him on the sudden warmth rather than the way Hannibal touches him, hands and fingers brushing along his shoulders, as he sits close by and draws Will into his arms like a guardian against the cold and police.

"Then complete your examination," Hannibal says calmly. "You will find nothing."

The cop tries to get more answers, but Hannibal and his lawyer stonewall them pretty effectively, so Will leaves them to it and simply curls up under the coat, grateful for the warmth.

"How did you find me?" Will signs.

Hannibal smiles wanly, but Will can feel his annoyance at the rudeness of the FBI. "You dropped your credit card in a leaf pile in your rush to leave. I thought to return it to you and instead found your house swarmed with dogs and officers."

"Sorry."

"It is not your fault. Besides, I had hoped to find you again. I would have liked to ask you something."

"Like a date?"

"Your loss."

Hannibal's smile grows a little larger at that, and this time when he touches Will's curls it's less reverent and more fond, a familiar caress instead of a new one. "I think," he says, "that you would enjoy going apple picking. I have found that it can be a calming activity."

" . . . What?"

---

The cops release Will and Hannibal shortly afterward, encouraged and badgered by Hannibal's lawyer and refusal to admit guilt, and Hannibal's glare is enough to keep even Jack Crawford at bay when he emerges and attempts to fail at apologizing yet again. Hannibal puts Will in his luxurious car, straps his seatbelt on, and then drives Will home, and Will doesn't protest when he immediately starts fiddling in Will's kitchen.

Finally, though, he has to ask, and at least now he has his tablet back.

“Why did you do that?”

Hannibal stirs calmly at whatever concoction he’s making. “Do what, Will?”

Will makes a face and switches to sign language. Better safe than sorry, if they’ve put any kind of tracking tech on Will’s tablet. Will can totally see Jack doing that, because he’s an asshole, but he’s not devoid of common sense or good ideas from time to time.

“You lied. For me, I mean. I wasn’t there when the class ended.”

Hannibal puts down his spoon and looks at Will, and it’s like when he touched Will all over again, warmth in his gaze like the sun gazing down upon him. “You did not kill that man, Will, even though he was very rude to you.”

“You don’t know that.”

“But I do know you.”

“Do you?”

Hannibal smiles again, that strange wide smile that stands out on his normally smooth face, and when Will meets his gaze, he finds his breath scattered to the four winds. Will reads so many things in that strange, stupidly attractive face: smugness, fondness, adoration, confidence, joy, contentedness, and much more. Hannibal truly believes that he knows Will, and Will understands at once that once Hannibal makes up his mind, very little can possibly change it.

“Well,” Hannibal says, “I would like to.”

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## EPILOGUE

The truth comes out at the end of the month, when Hannibal throws an extravagant Halloween party and insists that Will attends. It is a costume party, of sorts, but Will flat out refuses to let Hannibal choose his costume because he’s seen Hannibal’s wardrobe and it is more terrifying to Will than anything else.

Hannibal, fortunately, is more amused by Will’s defiance than offended. “Do you truly think so little of me?” he asks.

“I’ve seen the kind of Halloween costumes people wear. I am not wearing any of those skanky things.”

“Very well. I leave the costume up to you.”

Will is very grateful for this when he runs smack into the same doctor who once wielded a knife over Will’s throat and stole his voice.

“Oh. It’s you.”

Will just holds his glass tight and wishes for Hannibal. Hannibal has an uncanny talent of popping up unexpectedly when Will needs him and guiding him out of terrible situations, yet right now he seems to be taking his damn sweet time, chatting and fake laughing with some of his psychiatrist friends.

“I won’t apologize,” the doctor says. “I don’t believe your claims to innocence.”

At that, Will loses it, and maybe something in his face tells the doctor because in a blink of an eye the doctor is halfway across the room and attempting to make excuses. Will, meanwhile, heads for the wine cellar, wishing for his dogs and his whisky.

“Will,” Hannibal says, when he finally shows up. “I apologize, I did not realize that I had invited the one who stole your voice.”

When Hannibal hugs him, Will lets the flood release, and he finds himself griping Hannibal so tightly that he’s sure to leave bruises where his fingers are pressing so desperately into his waist and shoulders, but he knows Hannibal won’t care. Hannibal enjoys it when Will becomes desperate for his touch and his guidance, he enjoys being the anchor in the ocean and the pillar in the storm, he enjoys the idea that Will, when unsettled, now comes to him first and his alcohol later. He is becoming Will’s world, and Hannibal enjoys it to an unsettling high degree.

“Don’t make the doctor into a pumpkin pie, please. It’ll make for a bad pie.”

Hannibal goes still, like a cat on the prowl with new information. “Whatever do you mean, my darling?”

“There are people in that pumpkin pie, isn’t there? I went through the records of the Chesapeake Ripper’s patterns. Three victims in such a short time period, and a dinner party afterwards to consume the evidence. You’re growing sloppy.”

“My dearest Will,” Hannibal says, low into Will’s neck, snuffling against his skin like a particularly pleased dog. Will would say he has a fondness for the way Will smells, but Will’s wearing copious amounts of cologne right now so he imagines that all Hannibal is smelling is more manufactured than real. The real sniffing happens at night, when Hannibal undresses Will and sniffs all over him to his heart’s content, gorging himself on the scent of Will whilst Will sleeps.

“Why me?” Will asks, because really, why Will? Hannibal could literally have anyone, and he chose the man who can’t speak, has seven mangy dogs, and is generally covered in sweat, engine oil, and fur.

Hannibal’s eyes flash, and for a second, Will imagines great bloody antlers emerging from his forehead, black and red like ash and blood, to match the claws of his fingers.

“A wendigo,” Hannibal murmurs, “imprints by scent. I knew you were mine from the first breath I took in your presence.”

“Weirdo,” Will signs into Hannibal’s back.

“Your scent says that you find it more charming than annoying.”

“I still want a normal people-free pumpkin pie.”

“When all our guests are gone,” Hannibal promises. “I will bake you the best pumpkin pie that you have ever tasted with the freshest ingredients I have on hand.”

Will smiles in return then, because when Hannibal promises, he more than delivers. For example, he’d promised Will to have a place for his dogs to stay when Will started living more frequently at Will’s house, and that “place” had turned out to be a fully built and furnished shed, with indoor heating and toys and a pantry to make his homemade dog food. And that doesn’t even cover the car Hannibal bought, the clothes Hannibal tailored for him, or the many gifts Hannibal has lavished upon him, like he thinks that he needs to remind Will constantly of the fact that he wants to put a ring on his finger and announce their relationship to the whole wide world.

Will’s holding off on the ring for now. He wants to find the perfect one for Hannibal before he “lets” Hannibal talk him into marriage.

But that’s neither here nor there.

Right now, Will has Hannibal, he has his dogs, and he has a party to enjoy.

“Happy Halloween, Hannibal,” Will signs.

Hannibal kisses him, sweet and soft like the person-suit-wearing monster he is. “Happy Halloween, my Will.”

FINIS

## Chapter End Notes

Um, so I know the chapter count jumped from 31/31 to 32/32, but that's because I decided to make an index of all the summaries and associated tags for each word prompt just in case people wanted to come back for specific stories (and because I was also beginning to forget which word correlated to which story). Sorry it's not a surprise extra fic, lovelies.

Also, so my idea for this ficlet was, "Let's try and sneak in every single word prompt to make it special". Hence why there are some really forced in words. I blame my all-nighter brain :D

Now, to the announcement I hinted at yesterday! I am participating in NaNoWriMo 2016 this year, so although you won't get a ficlet every day as you have been, I will be steadily writing and will (eventually) produce a fully-fledged Hannigram fic. You can track my progress and updates [here](#) or just check the "My NaNoWriMo 2016 Progress"

tab on my tumblr. If you're curious as to my story, I can give you one hint: it will involve dæmons.

Finally, I cannot thank each and every one of you enough for your comments, your kudos, your reblogs and likes and everything you've done for me this past month. I started this as a fun little game for myself, and it turned out to be literally my best project to date, so thank you for joining me for this very wild ride. \*bows humbly and then scuttles back into the shadows from whence she came\*

# Index of All the Ficlets

## Chapter Summary

This will be an index of sorts of all my ficlets in this collection, linking each prompt with the summary and associated tags. Hopefully this will make it easier for anyone returning to find a specific story (including me lol, I am also starting to forget what word means what ficlet).

### **Day 1: Ghostbusters**

Summary: "We are *not* telling them that our first day was at a Ghostbusters movie."

Tags: Ghostbuster movie, Alternate Universe – Different First Meeting

### **Day 2: Pumpkin**

Summary: As Hades offered his queen the fruit of his realm, pomegranates, Hannibal will offer Will the fruit of his realm - pumpkin.

Tags: Greek and Roman mythology references, Purgatory, Hannibal makes Will immortal, Alternate Universe – Different First Meeting

### **Day 3: Trick or Treat**

Summary: Hannibal misunderstands the meaning of trick or treat.

Tags: Trick or Treating, Post WotL, Season 4, Hannibal Buys Will A Dog

### **Day 4: Séance**

Summary: Hannibal hires a magician to entertain his patients at the children's ward. Will brings a dog, balloons, and glitter.

Tags: Magician!Will, Surgeon!Hannibal, Beverly Katz cameo, Alana Bloom cameo, Matchmaker!Abigail Hobbs, Alternate Universe – Different First Meeting

### **Day 5: Scare**

Summary: Will is a stripper cop who turns up to give Hannibal a show. Hannibal is the idiot who thinks he's a real cop and immediately attacks. They both learn something new.

Tags: Stripper!Will, Hannibal and Will Fight, Sassy!Will, Implied Smut, Frederick Chilton cameo, Alternate Universe – Different First Meeting

### **Day 6: Vampire**

Summary: Will runs a shop for vampires to stock up on blood. Hannibal is the customer who's more interested in Will's blood than what he's selling.

Tags: Vampire!Hannibal, Sassy!Will, Fierce!Will, Possessive!Hannibal, Alternate Universe – Different First Meeting, Jack Crawford cameo, Jack Crawford Being Rude

### **Day 7: Fake Blood**

Summary: Hannibal is the owner of a prestigious synthesized blood shop with an impeccable

reputation and a desire to see how vampires would react to real human blood. Will is the newborn who wanders in and becomes Hannibal's latest experiment.

Tags: Vampire!Will, Possessive!Hannibal, Manipulative!Hannibal, Vampire!Will, Bedelia du Maurier cameo, Vampire!Bedelia

### **Day 8: Woods**

Summary: Will hasn't set foot outside the castle in over twenty years, so the very first time he manages to escape, he heads straight for the woods, only to meet something - or someone - who's been waiting patiently for a very long time for the best chance to strike..

Tags: Creature!Hannibal, Mason Verger cameo, Margot Verger, Frederick Chilton cameo, Imprisoned!Will, References to Snow White & The Huntsman

### **Day 9: Demon**

Summary: Hannibal must admit that he and Will's relationship doesn't get off to the strongest start, mostly because Hannibal is an outsider and Will tries to cut out his heart upon meeting him.

Tags: References to Arrow (TV), Francis Dolarhyde cameo, Hannibal is a Cannibal, League of Assassins, Alpha/Beta/Omega Dynamics, Mention of Mpreg, Abigail Hobbs cameo, Attempted Spousal Murder

### **Day 10: Skanky Halloween Costumes**

Summary: Abigail just wants a normal, non-skanky Halloween costume. Will and Hannibal team up to give her the very best.

Tags: Murder Family Fluff, Happy Murder Family

### **Day 11: Witches**

Summary: When a witch curses Will to the form of a mongoose, he finds solace in a friendly fellow cursed stag named Hannibal.

Tags: Ravenstag!Hannibal, Mongoose!Will, Witch!Freddie, References to Swan Princess, Implied Smut, Magical Curses, True Love's Kiss

### **Day 12: Haunted Mansion**

Summary: Jack says exactly two things to Will when he wakes up: "I'm sorry" and "Lecter didn't make it".

Tags: References to Once Upon A Time In Wonderland, Chiyoh cameo, Mind Palace, Implied Major Character Death, Jack Crawford is a Dick

### **Day 13: Werewolves**

Summary: Will is the newly turned werewolf about to enter in the fight for his life. His opponent? A very curious alpha named Hannibal Lecter.

Tags: Werewolf!Hannibal, Werewolf!Will, Mason Verger cameo, Alpha/Beta/Omega Dynamics, Attempted Murder, Will Finds Out

### **Day 14: Candy**

Summary: Normally dragon courting rituals don't involve elaborately posed dead bodies, but Will supposes that Hannibal is a little strange even by the criteria of medieval mythical monsters.

Tags: Dragon!Hannibal, Dragon!Will, Unusual Dragon Hoards, Teacups, Will's Dogs, The

Great Red Dragon cameo

*My FreshMeatFriday fic, many thanks for my nomination, damnslippypplanet!!!*

### **Day 15: Leaf Pile**

Summary: Will finds it in the leaf pile. Unfortunately, the great red dragon finds him shortly after, and what he unleashes changes both of their lives forever.

Tags: References to Marvel's Agents of SHIELD, Inhumans, Inhuman!Hannibal, Inhuman!Will, Francis Dolarhyde cameo, Reba McClane cameo, Jiaying, Hannibal Mentors Will

### **Day 16: Masquerade**

Summary: Will runs away from an arranged marriage and bumps into a man who introduces himself as Mads, son of Mikkel. Later on, Will finds out that the man is actually Hannibal Lecter, his future fiancé.

Tags: Arranged Marriage, Fake Names/Aliases, Hannibal and Will Fall In Love, Abel Gideon cameo, Sassy!Will, random deleted bath scene

### **Day 17: Haunted House**

Summary: Will is the only witness to the most prolific serial killer of all time, the Chesapeake Ripper. Too bad he seems to admire him more than he seems to fear him.

Tags: Dark!Will, Hannibal is a Cannibal, Jack Crawford, Age Difference, Graphic Description of Violence

### **Day 18: Zombies**

Summary: "They are trying to rename the Dead 'zombies' now, I believe," Hannibal says nonchalantly, like Will hasn't spent his entire life training to fight the Dead.

Tags: References to the Old Kingdom Trilogy, Garth Nix references, Abhorsen!Will, Immortal!Hannibal, Immortal!Will, Ravenstag!Hannibal, Non-chronological/non-linear Storytelling, Abigail cameo

### **Day 19: Full Moon**

Summary: Will Graham is a unicorn, sworn to defend all innocents and destroy all killers. Hannibal is a killer - and an innocent.

Tags: Unicorn!Will, Sassy!Will, Hannibal is a Cannibal

### **Day 20: Jack'O'Lantern**

Summary: Hannibal is the man trying to determine why his jack'o'lanterns keep going missing. Will is the faerie boy who mistakes the jack'o'lanterns as offerings.

Tags: Fae!Will, Confused!Hannibal, Faerie Rituals, Possessive!Will, Winston cameo, Lots of Jack'o'lanterns, Morbid Humor

### **Day 21: Scythe**

Summary: When Miriam Lass releases a tell-all book about how she caught the Chesapeake Ripper, Freddie Lounds ensures that she gets rights to the first interview the second the first public reading is over.

Tags: Miriam Lass, Freddie Lounds, Ambiguous/Open Ending, Major Character Death, References to Atonement, Post WotL

**Day 22: Hair Raising**

Summary: When Will wakes up, they tell him he's lucky to be alive and Hannibal is alive.

When Will wakes up, they tell him he's lucky to be alive and Abigail is alive.

Tags: References to Awake (TV), Abigail Hobbs, Hannibal, Bedelia du Maurier cameo, Post Mizumono, Ambiguous/Open Ending, Implied Major Character Death

**Day 23: Scarves**

Summary: Wherein Hannibal accidentally advises Jack Crawford and Will Graham on the best ways to annoy each other.

Tags: Sassy!Will, Jack Crawford is Rude, Manipulative!Hannibal, Fluff Without Plot, Hannibal is a Cannibal, Dark!Will, Will's Dogs, Alternate Universe – Canon Divergence

**Day 24: The Witching Hour**

Summary: When Will connects the dots, he has two choices: turn Hannibal in or remain silent. He picks the more reasonable option and blackmails him. Hannibal is just charmed enough to play along with it.

Tags: Sassy!Will, Dark!Will, Morbid Humor, Blackmail, Hannibal is a Cannibal, Alternate Universe – Canon Divergence, Possessive!Hannibal

**Day 25: Apple Picking**

Summary: Hannibal is Ladon, the great hundred-headed dragon who guards the golden apples of Hera. Will is the only Hesperides whom he somewhat tolerates.

Tags: References to Greek and Roman Mythology, Immortal!Will, Dragon!Hannibal, Hera, Alternative Universe – Different First Meeting

**Day 26: Wendigo**

Summary: The second Will puts Hannibal's food in his mouth, he immediately knows that he's eating human flesh.

Tags: God!Will, God!Hannibal, Hannibal Is Not A Nice Person, Forced Orgasm, Forced Eating Human Flesh, Dubious Consent, Possessive!Hannibal, Immortal!Abigail, Alternate Universe – Canon Divergence

**Day 27: Invisible**

Summary: When Will is hexed invisible, the last thing he expects is for Prefect Hannibal Lecter to look up and say, "I know you're there. I can smell you."

Tags: References to Harry Potter, Harry Potter AU, Margot Verger cameo, Alana Bloom cameo, Marlana, Mason Verger cameo, Magic, Possessive!Hannibal, Fluff Without Plot

**Day 28: Tarot Cards**

Summary: Will is a prince who has the job of rescuing the princess and killing the fearsome creature guarding her. Too bad that the princess doesn't need rescuing and the creature is utterly besotted with Will.

Tags: Hannigram In Space, Immortal!Hannibal, Ravenstag!Hannibal, Prince!Will, Beverly Katz cameo, Marlana, Mason Verger cameo, Space Opera Romance, Reincarnation

**Day 29: Possession**

Summary: Will Graham agrees to be possessed by the most infamous serial killer in human history. It's not his best decision.

Tags: References to Suicide Squad, Enchantress!Hannibal, Jack Crawford is a Dick, Immortal!Hannibal, Memory Loss, Implied Happy Ending

### **Day 30: Ritual**

Summary: In all fairness, Will is incredibly drunk when he does the ritual that summons the devil for a rent-free good apartment in New York.

Tags: References to Supernatural (TV), Angels, Lucifer!Hannibal, Gabriel!Chiyoh, Raphael!Bedelia, Michael cameo, BAMF Will, Immortal!Will, Attempted Murder, Hannibal Being Tortured, Possessive!Hannibal, Possessive!Will

### **Day 31: Happy Halloween**

Summary: Will knows without being told how bad it is that his only alibi for the Jack'o'lantern Killer is that he was at a pumpkin carving class.

Tags: Alternate Universe – Different First Meeting, Mute!Will, People Pumpkin Pie, Hannibal is a Cannibal, Wendigo!Hannibal, Jack Crawford is a Dick, Happy Ending, Molly cameo, Walter cameo

*My #ThePumpkinIsPeople fest contribution for Hannibal Cre-Ate-Ive*

## End Notes

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